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Literature

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The
SMART SET
Anthology

The

SMART SET

Anthology

Edited by Burton Rascoe

and Groff Conklin

REYNAL & HITCHCOCK

New York

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ARTHUR LEONARD ROSS, for Frank Harris' "How I Discovered Bernard Shaw" (July 1915)

CHARLES YALE HARRISON, for "The Treasure" (October 1915). Mr. Harrison states that "The Treasure" was written when he was fifteen years old, and published when he was sixteen. It was his first published manuscript. He adds: "Needless to say, I was inordinately proud of myself!"

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RICHARD LEGALLIENNE for "The Rose Garland" (November 1910).

SINCLAIR LEWIS, for "I'm A Stranger Here Myself" (August 1916)

- LUDWIG LEWISOHN, for "The Story Ashland Told at Dinner" (February 1919). Mr. LewisoHN wishes his "philosophical repudiation of these scribblings of my earlier years" to be stated here.
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- JOHN McCLURE, for "And Minstrels Flown With Pride" (October 1920)
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- MABEL McELLIOTT, for "The Renunciatory Gesture" (September 1921)
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'SMART SET" HISTORY

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by Burton Rascoe

ON December 31, 1897, John Adams Thayer, the new advertising manager of the Frank A. Munsey Publications, was given the bounce in what is probably the most vituperative letter of dismissal ever written by an employer to an employee. It ran to about 700 words and is a masterpiece of bawling-out. I pick out a sample:

"... you are not the strong man I expected to find in you. You have shown nothing of the alertness of temperament I expected to find in you. You have brought no new ideas into the house, no new ideas to the advertising department. You have brought no business, either directly or indirectly, to the advertising department in the four weeks you have been here—not so much as a line. You have shown no extraordinary genius in your correspondence; you have written no advertising, have got no advertising. And in your handling of the force you have not evidenced any remarkable ability or even first rate diplomacy.

"When you explained yesterday that I did not have sufficient confidence in you, I replied that you had done nothing to command my confidence. You answered that it was three months before you did anything at the Ladies Home Journal (sic). . .

"Such answers as these on this point show a lack on your part of a closely reasoning mind and no man can command my confidence in a managerial position unless he shows well-thought-out reasons for every act, every move he makes. . . . Your tendency toward red tape, your tendency to surround yourself with a halo of exaggerated importance, your petty jealousy when a man from the advertising department comes to me or I send for him to come to me—all this is extremely distasteful to me, and will not go for a minute in this house."

The author of the letter was Frank A. Munsey, a man who had burned his candle at both ends and had amassed a pile of tallow. He had worked all day every day in his younger years and had written success serials at night; and, when he could not sell his success novels to the magazines, he bought magazines, ran the serials and made a success out of them.

What had made Munsey so mad was that he had made an error in judgment, or thought he had, which came to the same with him.

What made him madder still was that in this error of judgment he was stuck with a contract whereby he was to pay Thayer \$7,500 for a year and Thayer had worked only one month of the contract. It griped him horribly to pay out money with no expectation of return. A psychologist need not be particularly astute to figure out that Munsey would not have gone into such a frenzy of denunciation if he merely wanted to fire a man. Nor was the letter the mere luxury of a release of feelings. It was both of these things, but it was also a deliberate and calculated effort to fire an employee so thoroughly, burn him up so completely, that he wouldn't even stop for his hat, much less ask for the unearned remainder due on his contract.

But if Munsey thought Thayer would not ask for, and get, the full amount of the contract, he soon found he had made another error in judgment. Thayer had the hide of a rhinoceros and the spunk of a mongoose. His conceit was so sublime (and, on the whole, rather justified) that when another man told him he was no good, extensively and categorically, he did not feel sorry for himself, he felt sorry for the accuser. When he came to write his autobiography he quoted the letter in full to show that, although Frank A. Munsey was a shrewd man in many respects, he was an utter goof when it came to sizing up a man like John Adams Thayer. In this autobiography he takes no revenge in caustic comments on Munsey's character. Instead he praises Munsey's capacity for hard work and his "genius" at money-making, defending him, even, against attacks upon Munsey's methods.

Thayer saw to it that Munsey paid the balance in cash and then he gave Munsey a piece of information. It was information to Thayer, not a boast. He told Munsey that in five years' time he would show Munsey he was wrong. And it *was* information, not a boast. In five years' time Thayer had made Munsey's success as a publisher seem plodding and humdrum. The chain-grocer-author-editor-publisher's own slowly and painfully built up publication was already on that toboggan on the downcourse of which the progress of a magazine is rarely checked. Thayer, on the other hand, had performed the almost impossible feat of taking over a magazine that was not only on the skids in circulation and advertising but actually insolvent and had turned it into the circulation and advertising as well as editorial sensation of the decade. After leaving Munsey he walked right into a \$10,000 job as advertising manager of the Butterick Publications and so justified faith in himself that he was soon able to raise credit to buy \$100,000 worth of Butterick

closed stock which netted him a fortune. Then with Erman J. Ridgway he bought *Everybody's* on notes for \$75,000.

He had the idea of having Thomas W. Lawson, the Boston financial buccaneer, write a series of articles exposing Wall Street operations and went up to Boston with his editor, John O'Hara Cosgrave, to get them. At first Lawson refused to see them; but Cosgrave was persistent and won Lawson's consent to write the series. Lawson, however, exacted a peculiar condition: it was that he was not to be paid a cent for the articles and that he was to bear the expense of a big campaign in the newspapers advertising the series. This condition was certainly one Thayer would not quibble about. Circulation boomed with the first issue carrying the serial, "Frenzied Finance." Print orders doubled, tripled, got out of hand; advertising poured in; the advertising rate, which had been \$150 a page when Thayer took over the magazine, went to \$4,500 a page. Just five years after Munsey had canned Thayer, Thayer was paying his own advertising manager \$15,000 a year and the Butterick company was offering \$3,000,000 for *Everybody's* stock. Thayer was a rich man.

And as it is fairly common with men who get rich suddenly (or even laboriously) to acquire social ambitions or to have social ambitions thrust upon them by wives and daughters, Thayer moved into a big house, began to entertain and to look around for somebody or something to give him a leg up on the social ladder. He had turned literary in a leisure hour and had written his autobiography, *Astir: A Publisher's Life Story*. The first edition was limited and expensively designed and printed. That was to impress his coevals in the financial and publishing world. A second, cheaper, edition was issued for the proletariat under the title, *Out of the Rut*. A successful French translation was brought out by a Paris publisher under the title, *Les Étapes du Succès, Souvenirs d'un "business man" Américain*. It was praised (or at least Thayer thought it was praised) by William Dean Howells, doyen of American letters, for its "breath-taking, hair-raising frankness."

What Thayer finally calculated would give him a real entrée into society was to own and publish *The Smart Set*. As an alternative to such a calculation he might as well have decided the best and quickest way was to go down to headquarters and get himself mugged and finger-printed under the Bertillon system.

But he did not know that. He bought *The Smart Set*, a magazine which had been the idea and minor source of income of a magnificent,

militant and preposterous character of the 'Nineties, Colonel William D'Alton Mann, who had scandalized, terrified, and delighted New York "society" with a piquant and discreet form of bilking called *Town Topics*, a weekly. The crusty old codger with his white imperials, his parted whiskers, his Homburg hats, his fancy waistcoats, his awesome dignity and his courtly manners, had been threatened, sued for libel, publicly horsewhipped, cold-shouldered by bankers, pursued by creditors and bailiffs and had gone imperturbably on with the wise theory that not only do people like to read about the doings of high society but that members of high society like to read about the doings, especially the scandalous doings, in high society themselves. Moreover he knew he did not have to pay snoopers to dig up scandal, because members of high society were always eager to tip him off about matrimonial mix-ups, impending divorces, sexual irregularities and other so-called "peep-hole" stuff so long as he did not divulge the source of his information. Publicly they pretended to abhor the colonel; privately they slipped him material for his weekly. They all read and supported his paper.

The Smart Set was the icing on the colonel's cake. It represented the cultural side of his pirate and scapegrace nature. It was intended by him that not only should it appeal to the literate section of New York society and authentically reflect, in fiction and articles, the interests, tastes, codes and activities of that society but that, in the main, it should be written by members of that society.

In this, the colonel's opinion of the literary abilities of New York's smart set was a fulsome exaggeration. Manuscripts came in, true enough, from literary aspirants among the dowagers and débutantes, and occasionally from the reams of verse there was a something in the form of verse that scanned and rhymed and could be printed as a filler without damaging the magazine; but mostly the manuscripts might have been more literate and less amateurish if they had come from the servants' quarters of the houses from which they were mailed. Alice Duer, later Alice Duer Miller, an authentic member of New York society who *could* write, was such a glorious phenomenon to *The Smart Set* editors that, in sheer astonishment, they immediately proclaimed her a genius of the highest calibre, whereas she was (and happily still is) only a competent and entertaining writer of run-of-the-mill magazine fiction.

Arthur Grissom was the first editor of *The Smart Set*, and from all

accounts he was a brilliant and discerning one, soon to be ably assisted by an enthusiastic and romantic young poet from Louisville, Kentucky, Charles Hanson Towne. Young Richard Duffy was editing *Ainslee's* and *The Smart Set* editors soon gave up hope of recruiting talent from New York society and began to compete with *Ainslee's* for meritorious fiction by new and unknown writers. These two magazines were fresh, daring and alive but they were considered (if considered at all) as vulgar, indecorous and even immoral by the snobbish, limited and tyrannical Richard Watson Gilder (he had once refused to see Robert Louis Stevenson who had called at his office in *The Century*) and other editors who considered themselves the guardians of literary taste and morals—and who, in point of fact, to a large extent governed and controlled the accepted "literature" of the period.

The literature controlled, acknowledged and accepted by the Gilders, Henry Mills Aldens the Hamilton Wright Mabies and the Howellses was prim, desiccated, proper and puritanical. This was a break for *Ainslee's* and *The Smart Set*. New and unknown writers with something new and interesting to say and a fresh way of saying it, took a good look at the old, established magazines like *Century*, *Harpers*, *Atlantic* and *Scribner's* and sent their manuscripts to *Ainslee's* and *The Smart Set*. Thus into the offices of *Ainslee's* and *The Smart Set* came manuscripts of short stories by a writer who signed his stories, "By O. Henry"; and there was excitement's rush of the blood to the heads of Richard Duffy and Arthur Grissom and Charles Hanson Towne on reading these stories; and thus there was later some dispute as to what editor had "discovered" O. Henry.

And for the reasons enumerated above, manuscripts to be bought and paid for at much lower rates than they would have been had they gone to the old-line, conservative magazines and (small chance!) had been accepted by them, came to *The Smart Set* and *Ainslee's*—manuscripts by Justus Miles Forman, Gertrude Atherton, Mary Austin, Carolyn Wells, Arthur Symons, Agnes Repplier, Alfred Sutro, Richard Le Gallienne, Nalbro Bartley, Anna Katherine Green, Arthur Stringer, Frederick Arnold Kummer, Ludwig Lewisohn, Edwin L. Sabin, Gelett Burgess, Edgar Saltus, Reginald Wright Kauffman, Harris Merton Lyon, Ralph Henry Barbour, Alfred Damon Runyon, Emerson Hough, Roy Temple House, Morgan Robertson, Mrs. Havelock Ellis, Jack London, Channing Pollock, George Middleton, Allan Updegraff, Frederick Taber Cooper, H. S. (later Hugh) Walpole, Edgar Fawcett,

Archibald Marshall, William J. Locke, F. Tennyson Jesse, E. Phillips Oppenheim, Susan Glaspell, Felix Riesenber, Mildred Cram, Henry Sydnor Harrison, Lee Wilson Dodd, John Erskine, Theodore Dreiser and James Branch Cabell.

These names represent only the early prose contributors. The poets represented in the early history of *The Smart Set* include Lisette Woodworth Reese, Bliss Carman, Josephine Preston Peabody, Madison Cawein, Theodosia Garrison, Blanche Shoemaker Wagstaff, William Rose Benét, Amelia Josephine Burr, Sara Teasdale, John Kendrick Bangs, Deems Taylor, Clinton Scollard, Louis Untermeyer, John G. Nichardt, Ethel M. Kelley and Ezra Pound. Poets were paid at the rate of twenty-five cents a line. Prose was paid for at the rate of a cent a word. The first story O. Henry sold *The Smart Set*, "By Proxy," was only 1700 words in length. He was paid \$17. He immediately wrote and sent them one 6000 words in length and said he would take a \$10 discount for cash if sent by return mail, because he was in Pittsburgh and wanted to come to New York to see if he couldn't make a living as a writer. Charles Hanson Towne, who relates the incident in his *Adventures in Editing* says the full \$60 was dispatched to O. Henry, but after O. Henry got to New York they could not locate him. Only four O. Henry stories in all appeared in *The Smart Set*.

II

AMONG the new and promising writers listed above, some went on to achieve great popular success, some dropped writing for other professions, some slowly achieved solid and enduring literary reputations. Tastes and interests change and the changed tastes are reflected in the writings of the new writers; but the tastes and interests of the average magazine editor is a veritable Rock of Prudential, not even yielding to world upheavals and blasts of dynamite. His taste is usually founded upon a particular issue or spell in the life of his magazine which showed up to the best advantage in the circulation chart, even if the result was wholly unexpected. If a man writes a story that is a circulation success, he wants the man to keep on writing the same story over again, not knowing that, left to his own devices, the average man will do it anyway. And if a particular issue of a magazine is a success as a whole, your average editor eternally tries to keep to the "standard" set in that issue.

Thus Richard Watson Gilder, Henry Mills Alden, Walter Hines Page,

and even William Dean Howells kept in mind the "standards" set by Octave Thanet, Amelia Barr, John Fox Jr., Winston Churchill and Henry Van Dyke, at the time when *The Smart Set* and *Ainslee's* were publishing budding work by those mentioned above. But *The Smart Set* itself became moribund, the society it hoped to cater to was undergoing a metamorphosis, the mismanaged magazine was in debt to the printing house that published it, and the involved and harrassed Colonel Mann was glad enough to get shed of it—especially to someone he considered a sucker.

This offered the industrious and socially ambitious John Adams Thayer his opportunity. He acquired *The Smart Set*, paying through the nose for it, and, apparently, sat back waiting for the doors of society to open. He was not for nearly three years to encounter an editor as egotistic, self-assured, arrogant and energetic as he was, who was to throw the most explosive piece of intellectual dynamite into the complacent peace and quiet of literary New York that has ever been thrown by anybody.

In fact he had already harbored the editor in *The Smart Set* office for several months without knowing it; and the explosion was a shock to him which he first apprehended clearly in a most surprising jump in the circulation figures of *The Smart Set*. Thayer had all the money he needed and if he and his family had not got into the very inner society, he and they had, with or without the aid of the *The Smart Set*, got into a society that served them just as well and he was regarding *The Smart Set* as one of his playthings rather than as one of his properties. But the jump in circulation figures gave him a start. That was something he could take an interest in. He investigated and found that, without his knowledge or foresight, he had acquired a terrifying young editor by the name of Willard Huntington Wright.

When Thayer went to take a look at this editor he had unwittingly hired, Wright nearly scared the life out of him. He frightened Thayer into signing him on as editor for a year at double the salary he had been getting, with an ample budget for the purchase of literary material and with contractual provision that Thayer was not to have a thing to say about what went into his own magazine. He promised results. Perhaps Thayer, upon looking at this self-confident young man, recalled his own self confidence which had led Frank A. Munsey into a year's contract with him on a promise of results.

At any rate, in Wright, Thayer had met a man as sure of his ground

as Thayer had always been, and as intimidating as Thayer had become. Wright was twenty-four years old; he had been an athlete; he had a resonant and snarling voice; and he looked astonishingly like the German Kaiser, Wilhelm II, in Wilhelm's rôle of War Lord. It was a resemblance Wright carefully cultivated with fierce up-turned mustaches, trimmed like the Kaiser's and with the Kaiser's scowl. Wilhelm then, in 1912, was a more popular American hero than he was to become two years later. He and Theodore Roosevelt were preaching the energetic and war-like life; Houston Stuart Chamberlain had found in the Kaiser such an incarnation of the stern, blond, Aryan virtues that he had become a German citizen the better to expound those cockeyed doctrines of Nordic supremacy which were later to be espoused and expanded by Madison Grant and Lothrop Stoddard and still later by Adolf Hitler.

Wright had been graduated from two small California colleges and had studied at Harvard for a year where he specialized in philosophy and aesthetics. After leaving Harvard he had become literary editor of the Los Angeles Times, writing a solid page of book reviews for every Sunday. He had saturated himself in modern literature, especially French and German; his brother was MacDonald Wright, an important American post-impressionist, and Willard Wright, as an art critic, espoused the cause of Cézanne, Gauguin, Picasso and Matisse beligerently in newspaper and magazine columns; and, because he had taken unto himself all the arts as expounder and practitioner, he did not neglect music. Between poems, book reviews, a novel, a book on aesthetics, and a book and articles on modern art, he learned musical composition and wrote piano pieces roughly in the mode of Debussy, Prokofieff, Stravinsky and Schoenberg.

In California Wright had been in correspondence with Percival Pollard, the highly talented, irreverent, crusading book reviewer and dramatic critic for *Town Topics*, whose brilliant *Masks and Minstrels of New Germany* introduced to H. L. Mencken, George Jean Nathan, Willard Huntington Wright and a number of other aspiring young literary persons the play spirit and democratization of the arts which had been introduced in Germany by the *Ueberbrett'l* movement and had produced such novelties as Wedekind, Schnitzler, Reinhardt, Bahr, and other poets and playwrights of the beer-halls of Munich and Vienna. The more spirited section of the American intelligentzia were tiring of the claims made by the older critics for the profundity of

Maeterlinck's philosophy, the depth and beauty of Hauptmann's plays and novels, the social significance of Brioux, the moral philosophy of Tolstoy, and the historical profundity of the novels of Winston Churchill.

The Victorian pall was still over American literature; the battle in defense of Ibsen was still being fought; it was not even generally conceded among the intellectual élite that Wagner was anything but caterwauling, that the French novelists ever produced anything, with few exceptions, but pornography, or that Manet, much less Cézanne, could paint. Pollard, Vance Thompson and James Gibbon Huneker introduced strange names of now familiar Europeans into their literary articles and essays and, moreover, described their work enticingly. It was like dangling forbidden fruit before a great many young people with instinctive good taste in literature who had been brought up under the teaching that Mark Twain was vulgar, that Henry Van Dyke was a philosopher, that Robert Underwood Johnson was a poet and that William Allen White and Owen Wister were great American novelists.

If the official literature of the period, that is, the literature countenanced and even written by members of the incredible American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters was decorous to an almost lethal degree, the influence it exercised by precept and criticism over magazine literature was (when we look back upon it now) almost beyond belief. Editorial taboos now no longer in force would make a list several typewritten pages long. Those were in the days, not twenty-five years ago, when even the word "Hell" was written like "Jehovah" among the Hebrews, without a vowel.

Pollard had fallen into an illness from which he never recovered and, finding his double duties as editorial and dramatic critic too onerous for him, had looked about for a bright young man to succeed him in the book review department and had picked out Willard Huntington Wright, an ardent disciple of H. L. Mencken. That was in 1910. Wright continued his work in Los Angeles but came to New York occasionally to renew contact with the East and to visit his idol, Mencken. On one of these occasions in the fall of 1911 Mencken introduced him to Norman Boyer, then editor of *The Smart Set* and Boyer asked Wright if he had anything he might use in *The Smart Set*. Wright sent back from California the essay-article (reprinted for the first time in this anthology) "Los Angeles—the Chemically Pure." Boyer accepted it with enthusiasm and offered Wright a job as his assistant.

Wright came to New York in December 1911 and went to work as sub-editor of *The Smart Set*. His article was printed and it made a sensation. Lower California roared with denunciations of the expatriate Wright with threats of lynching him if he ever set foot in California, while San Franciscans snickered at the discomfiture of the rival city. But, not only was Southern California outraged by the article: many others were outraged in all sections of the country by Wright's daring to discuss topics in a magazine which had never been discussed in magazines before but had been reserved for the pulpit (as evils to be denounced), the saloon and the smoking-room. The circulation of the magazine ran up by leaps and bounds.

Meanwhile Pollard within a short time had died and Wright had taken on the job of dramatic, as well as literary, critic of *Town Topics*. Boyer had tired of his job and had begun to leave things pretty much in the hands of his assistant; and later he got out of the magazine altogether leaving the whole editorial direction of *The Smart Set* in Wright's hands. This was the situation Thayer faced when he came down to see what was going on at his magazine: the author of the sensational article was legatee of the editorship. What happened when publisher and editor met has been related.

From "A Magazine of Cleverness" Wright expanded the policy with this announcement: "*The Smart Set* magazine has no mission, social, religious or political, to perform. But it must not be supposed that it has no purpose, no moving spirit. Behind it, animating all its pages and shaping all its activities there is a very Definite and Persistent Idea. Its Prime Purpose is to Provide Lively Entertainment for Minds That Are Not Primitive."

III

BUT, meanwhile, there were two staff contributors to the magazine who had been writing regular monthly articles, one on the theater and one on books, since 1908. One was George Jean Nathan and the other was H. L. Mencken. The energizing influence and the editorial ideas of Wright were to galvanize Mencken and Nathan into action and to form the triumvirate, Mencken, Nathan and Wright, who were to make *The Smart Set* for the one year that Wright was the fully accredited editor not only the greatest single year from a literary and revolutionary point of view, of the magazine, but to make *The Smart Set* for that year the most memorable, the most audacious, the best

edited, and the best remembered of any magazine ever published on this continent. Wright, as an editor, was anarchic; he was twenty years ahead of his time; he opened the eyes of a great many talented men and women as to what could be written about honestly, with truth and beauty; and he gave a blow to magazine taboos which was vastly to aid in liberating the cramped and stifled spirit of American literature.

George Jean Nathan was a young newspaper graduate from the ranks of *The New York Herald* who had been to Cornell, studied abroad, specialized in languages and in the theater of modern France and Germany and who had written brilliant and erudite articles on the drama for *The Bookman* under the editorship of Harry Thurston Peck and who had been the dramatic critic and associate editor of *The Bohemian*, an early forerunner of *The New Yorker*, and dramatic critic for *Harper's Weekly*, edited by Norman Hapgood. Boyer had decided to make a bid for literary prestige for his magazine because it had begun to suffer under the criticism that it was frivolous and limited in its appeal to society nit-wits. He had engaged Nathan as dramatic critic to follow Channing Pollock and asked his friend, Theodore Dreiser, then editor of *The Delineator*, to suggest somebody of intelligence and style to write a regular department devoted to book reviews.

Dreiser recalled a lad who had impressed him with samples of work he had published. Dreiser tells about it in an appendix to Dr. Isaac Goldberg's *The Man Mencken*. Dr. Leonard K. Hirschberg, a Baltimore physician and graduate of Johns Hopkins had come to Dreiser with the idea for a series of articles on the care and feeding of infants. Dr. Hirschberg explained that whereas he could supply all the most modern scientific data on diet and hygiene for children, he was no hand at writing; but that this handicap he had surmounted by securing as collaborator a young editorial writer on *The Baltimore Sun* named Mencken. The articles duly arrived written in a sprightly and entertaining fashion, in a style at once bold, pungent and clear. They were accepted, paid for and published under Dr. Hirschberg's name alone. In connection with the articles, Mencken came in to see Dreiser one day.

He was, so Dreiser writes, "a taut, ruddy, blue-eyed, snub-nosed youth of twenty-eight or nine whose brisk gait and ingratiating smile proved to me at once enormously intriguing and amusing. I had, for some reason not connected with his basic mentality you may be sure, the sense of a small town roisterer or college sophomore of the crudest and yet most disturbing charm and impishness, who, for some reason,

had strayed into the field of letters. More than anything else he reminded me of a spoiled and petted and possibly over-financed brewer's or wholesaler's son who was out for a lark. With the sang-froid of a Caesar or a Napoleon he made himself comfortable in a large and impressive chair which was designed primarily to reduce the over-confidence of the average beginner. And from that particular and unintended vantage point he beamed on me with the confidence of a smirking fox about to devour a chicken. So I was the editor of the Butterick Publications. He had been told about me. However, in spite of *Sister Carrie*, I doubt if he had ever heard of me before this. After studying him in that almost arch-episcopal setting which the chair provided, I began to laugh. 'Well, well,' I said, 'if it isn't Anheuser's own brightest boy out to see the town,' and with that unfailing readiness for any nonsensical flight that has always characterized him, he proceeded to insist that this was true. 'Certainly he *was* Baltimore's richest brewer's son and the yellow shoes and tie he was wearing were characteristic of the jack-dandies and rowdy-dows of his native town. Why not? What else did I expect? His father brewed the best beer in the world.' "

It is important to bear in mind this first definite impression Mencken made upon Dreiser because it is a true and suggestive summing up of characteristics Mencken was later to impress upon the literary world. Both Nathan and Mencken were hired in the summer of 1908. Mencken's first article appeared in the September issue of *The Smart Set* and Nathan's first appeared in the issue following. But it is important also to observe that not until Willard Huntington Wright became editor of *The Smart Set* did either one of them begin really to show the qualities as writers that later distinguished them.

During those previous four years when Mencken was the book reviewer and Nathan the dramatic critic, Mencken displayed some of the bravado and buffoonery, the Methodist-baiting, the impatience with reformers, censors and politicians that had won him a local reputation as the anti-crusade crusader and Peck's Bad Boy of his "Free Lance" column in *The Baltimore Sun*; but the blend in him of the influences of Brann the Iconoclast, of Elbert Hubbard, of Percival Pollard, of James Gibbon Huneker, of Thomas Huxley the stylist among scientific materialists, of Kipling, of Bernard Shaw, and of the essential Mencken who is both comedian and birchman, half German pedant and half clown, had not synthesized and become integrated. And Nathan remained during those four years disdainful but sedate, guarded in his

vocabulary, severely cautious as befitted a studious, well-read, well-traveled critic of the drama somewhat ambitious to become the Lemaitre of America. He had not yet wholeheartedly espoused a cult of hedonism or even begun to cultivate an attitude. Wright, who could not write as well as either of them was a better editor than either of them. He permitted them to dance, in the Nietzschean phrase, with arms and legs and he showed them what in the nature of an intelligent and sophisticated magazine *could* be published in the America of the yokels and Methodists they denounced.

It is a curious and interesting thing that in the two biographies by Dr. Isaac Goldberg, *The Man Mencken* and *The Theater of George Jean Nathan*, Wright's name appears only once in the index of the biography of Nathan and not at all in the biography of Mencken. The subjects furnished the biographer with most of the data. Mencken was especially helpful to Dr. Goldberg, writing so fully about himself that Dr. Goldberg was able to incorporate much material by Mencken unchanged in the text. Yet in the Mencken biography the reader would be led to infer that, until Mencken and Nathan took over the editorship of *The Smart Set* in 1914, the magazine had been "associated with a sort of perfumed pornography." It would appear also from the Mencken biography that the great days of the magazine *began* with the joint editorship of Mencken and Nathan.

The reason for this implication will become clearer, if not very clear, as this narrative progresses. Meanwhile it is necessary to point out that Wright had set the tone and standard of the magazine under his editorship and that no issue under the joint editorship of Mencken and Nathan was comparable from an editorial and literary point of view to any single issue under the editorship of Wright. Wright's reign was brief. After he had gone, or at least after an interval after he had gone, Nathan and Mencken carried on valiantly, meritoriously and with great kudos to themselves, an exciting, stimulating, vital and important magazine to which Willard Huntington Wright had given direction. Moreover, at first, it was a modified and timorous carrying out of the Wright policy, almost an emasculation of it during the war years, and not until 1918 was a wholly vigorous gay-hearted and uncomprising policy renewed. The years 1918-1921 were the great years under the Mencken-Nathan ægis.

It is a significant fact that, whereas most people associate *The Smart Set* with the names of Mencken and Nathan because of the brilliant work they did on it from 1914 to 1924, when I asked old readers of the

magazine to tell me stories or articles they especially remembered, these stories and articles almost invariably had appeared under Wright's editorship. And of those who wrote to me upon hearing that the anthology was being got together most of them asked me not to forget to include some story or other which appeared during the time Wright was editor.

The story most frequently called to my attention was one no one who read it would ever forget. Some of the attention callers had forgotten the name of the story and the name of the author but they remembered what it was about and told me. The story is "Daughters of Joy." The author is Barry Benefield. I myself had thought of that story when the idea of the anthology first came up, but we have not included it in this anthology, for several reasons. One is that it is a very famous short story and therefore has been included in other anthologies. Second, because it appears prominently in a fine collection of Mr. Benefield's short stories which was issued by the Century Company under the title *Short Turns*. Third, because Mr. Benefield sold a whole batch of short stories to Willard Huntington Wright to be published in *The Smart Set* after they had been turned down by every magazine in the country, "every single one," as Mr. Benefield emphasizes it. And they are all excellent short stories, fine and delicate in craftsmanship, new in point of view. We have chosen as a particular example of Mr. Benefield's art, a story called "The Tear-Squeezer" in the magazine and republished in *Short Turns* under the title "The Glow Peddler."

Willard Huntington Wright (now perhaps more widely known under his penname, S. S. Van Dine) relates how Benefield first came to him with a short story after the revolutionary editorial program Wright adopted had already begun to show in the text of the magazine. A shy, pale, wren-like creature wearing a collar much too big for him, black string tie, and clothes that hung loosely upon his diminutive frame, with eyes peering from behind silver-rimmed glasses, timidly but amusedly, sat in a chair before Wright, handed over a smudged and much-handled manuscript and said, "I think it is only fair to tell you that that story has been turned down by every magazine in the country—every single one." Wright answered "That is the very best recommendation you can give it."

Benefield left and Wright read the story that night. Wright told me that next morning he was still trembling with the thrill of discovery over it and called Benefield up to tell him the story was sold, and asked

him did he have any more that had been turned down by the leading magazines. Benefield replied he had six. Wright said he would take them all, sight unseen. And he did.

Thus it came about that Benefield took the pseudonym of Paul Choiseul, or it was given him by Wright. In several issues of the magazine Benefield had two stories. Wright thought it was better not to have two short stories by the same author in one magazine. Thus, for instance, in the issue for June 1913 Benefield's name is on "Bachelor Embalmers" whereas the name Paul Choiseul is signed to Benefield's famous story, "White Silk Tights."

Next in popularity among the attention-callers were the Raegan stories by Albert Payson Terhune, "The Girl Who Couldn't Go Wrong" being the attention-callers' favorite and one I had long and well-remembered. Next in popularity was the late George Bronson-Howard's short story, "The Parasite," a malign, sardonic, and exciting story based, as many people know, upon the marriage (for money) of the late Wilson Mizner, Broadway wit, to the widow of Charles T. Yerkes. Yerkes, it will be remembered, was the prototype of Cowperwood in Dreiser's *The Financier* and *The Titan*. Others vividly recalled Wright's searing article on Los Angeles; and many remembered the only play Joseph Conrad ever wrote called "One Day More." Still others were partial to the series on the night life of Europe written by Mencken, Nathan and Wright.

All these well-remembered items appeared under Wright's editorship. Also Wright was the first American editor to publish a short story by George Moore, the first in this country to publish D. H. Lawrence, James Stephens, James Joyce, Frank Wedekind, Arthur Strindberg, Arthur Schnitzler, Michael Artzibashef, Gabriele D'Annunzio, Ford Madox Ford, Max Beerbohm, and Edgar Jepson. Nearly all of the work by these writers had been rejected by the other contemporary editors.

After the magazine had got well under way and material had been bought and scheduled for several issues ahead, Wright suggested that Thayer pay the expenses of a trip abroad for Wright, Nathan and Mencken. The reasons he advanced were (1) Wright himself would be able to pick up a lot of material cheaply in Europe (2) Nathan would have an advantage over the other dramatic critics by becoming *au courant* with what was going on in the theaters of Europe (3) Mencken could get a change of scene and (4) all three of them could write articles for *The Smart Set* on the interesting topic of the night life of Europe.

Thayer was opulent, grateful, liberal and in the mood: he sent the three of them abroad well provided with letters of credit.

From this venture was born the series which was later incorporated into the rare book, bound in yellow, with decorations by Thomas Benton, and called *Europe After 8:15* published by the John Lane Company on a schedule which brought it out shortly after the war had been declared, wherefore it registered a flop, although later it was to command the highest price of any Mencken or Nathan item among rare book collectors. On the fly leaf of my copy, Mencken has identified the pieces for me: "Nathan wrote Berlin and Paris. Wright wrote Vienna and most of London. Mencken wrote the Preface, Munich and the beginning and end of London." Nathan's essay on Paris was the one we selected for this volume, as being the more generally appealing and as being one of the best examples of Nathan's prose.

On the return of the trio from Europe, a closer collaboration of the three in furnishing text for the magazine began, although Wright was still the editor solely responsible for the contents. The issue for June, 1913, was the first in which Wright's name as editor appeared in the mast-head, although he had, in fact, been the editor for some time before. The magazine led off with Paul Choiseul's (Barry Benefield's) "White Silk Tights," followed by "An English Saint" by Frank Harris and contributions in prose and verse by Theodore Dreiser, Edna Kenton, Barry Benefield, John Reed, Reginald Wright Kauffman, George Sylvester Viereck, George Bronson-Howard, Daniel Carson Goodman, John Hall Wheelock, Paul Scott Mowrer, Joyce Kilmer, Lizette Woodworth Reese, Louis Untermeyer, Sara Teasdale, Frank Wedekind, Marguerite Mooers Marshall, a one-act play in French by Florian-Parmentier (a one-act play or a short story in the original French had been a regular editorial feature in the magazine since the beginning and was to remain so until the magazine was sold to Hearst in 1924) and Mencken's and Nathan's pungent departments.

In addition Wright began with that issue a department of miscellaneous brief comments and observations called "Pertinent and Impertinent" and signed it "By Owen Hatteras." It was the joint work of Wright, Nathan and Mencken. Into it went notes, epigrams, brief satires, and short squibs of all kinds, some of them sent in by contributors and run, with the rest, under the Hatteras name. The contributors' department labeled "Americana" first appeared as an item in "Pertinent and Impertinent"; it grew, and the idea was later used by

Mencken and Nathan as a permanent feature of *The American Mercury*. Nathan's own special idea, "The American Credo" first appeared as a Nathan contribution, unsigned, in "Pertinent and Impertinent"; it expanded, with help from Wright, Mencken and dozens of anonymous contributors, and finally reached the dimensions of a book, signed by Nathan and Mencken.

In that June, 1913, issue, Mencken also contributed, besides his book reviews, the first of his series on "The American." In the July issue Nathan contributed a satirical article called "Scenes from the Great American Drama" in addition to his regular department on the theater. The series on the night life of the European capitals began in the October issue with Wright's article on Vienna. The tri-collaboration was going strong.

But opposition to the magazine was going strong, too. Wright had created a sensation; he had astonished and flabbergasted other editors; the younger generation in the schools and colleges was reading the magazine avidly; school-teachers in the Middle-West and South were first shocked, then pleased, and encouraged to send in stories of their own; something fresh, vital, entertaining, joyous, daring, close to life had come into a prim and sentimental literature. The new is always feared by the oldsters. The magazine was denounced in press and pulpit as immoral, corrupting, foreign, anarchistic; timorous subscribers wrote in scolding letters cancelling their subscriptions. The magazine was getting wide advertising and the news-stand sales were increasing.

But Thayer was afraid of the storm. If he had been courageous to ride it, Wright might have built up the best and one of the best money-making magazines in the country on the free advertising the magazine was getting. But inconsiderable advertising (the magazine did not depend upon advertising for revenue) was withdrawn in a huff by inconsiderable advertisers; friends at Thayer's clubs began to suggest that he was getting out a magazine they would not care to have their wives and daughters read; and, at last, Wright's contract expiring, Thayer decided to give up the fight which had just begun.

IV

IN the issue of March, 1914, with Wright well out of the way, Thayer announced a change of policy in a statement so characteristically frank and ingenuous, and so indicative of the spirit of those times that I reproduce it in its entirety for its literary-historical importance as well as for the bearing it has upon this narrative:

GATHERING LAURELS

"During the past year *The Smart Set* has been gathering laurels unto itself as a unique magazine for those who desire to keep abreast and ahead of modern literary currents." *Boston Transcript*, Jan. 17, 1914

To gather laurels is one thing; to publish a successful magazine is quite another thing. For no magazine is really successful unless sufficient readers bring to it that support which gives a fair return on the investment. *The Smart Set* has always been a financial as well as a literary success, the past year proving no exception.

But a magazine must progress; otherwise it surely decays, becomes a worryment to the publisher, an annoyance to its readers, and ends in futility. For this reason, during the year 1913, we experimented along a somewhat new and advanced line. In the April issue we stated our belief that a magazine which would succeed with the better class of readers, seeking quality and not mere quantity in its subscriptions, must stand for truth in its delineation of the drama of human life.

As this is an age of increasing frankness in the discussion of matters hitherto generally avoided, we came out in behalf of a generous freedom in literary expression. We further stated at that time that our stories need not strive to point a bourgeois moral; that virtue must not necessarily be a happy ending. for the great moving stories of life often end in disaster.

In the desire to make a magazine of high quality, the work of the leading writers of England and the Continent was sought out. Brieux, Strindberg, Schnitzler, Wedekind, D'Annunzio, George Moore, Frank Harris, Maarten Maartens, Leonard Merrick—these were some of the foreign authors of distinction who became contributors. In deference to what some regard as a very important present-day tendency, we published many strong and realistic stories told as they would actually happen in real life, regardless of whether the final outcome were cheering or depressing. In prose and verse alike we encouraged the new schools, and a distinctly modern touch was given to the magazine. In other words, *The Smart Set* essayed to be unafraid, unhampered by prejudice, and to keep abreast and even ahead of the prevailing tendencies in literature.

This course won us the strong approval of many well-known authors and literary critics. Eminent men who merely dipped into other magazines read *The Smart Set* from cover to cover. Our poetry, always of genuine worth, last year attained a very high standard. In his last annual anthology of magazine verse, William Stanley Braithwaite credits *The Smart Set* with forty-nine poems of distinction, as against thirty in *Scribner's* and *The Century* respectively, and twenty-nine in *Harpers*.

But—together with this academic approval we have received stout protests. Many of our most valued readers have written us that they did not like the innovation; some of the stories, though written by distinguished English, Continental and American authors, have struck them as too sombre; the frankness of certain others has displeased them. In short, we have been too serious as regards the relations of literature to life.

We admit a certain force in the criticism, and so, while modestly wearing the bays we have gathered during the past year, we announce, not a less discriminating realism in such realistic stories as we may publish, but a good round measure of romantic and humorous relief to the end that our friends, old and new, may find in us that variety they ask of a magazine which, above all, seeks to entertain. We shall continue to make our appeal especially to the well-educated, thinking, appreciative, alert-minded class of Americans who like fiction with a little tang to it; who relish a bit of subtlety now and then; who like to be surprised; who enjoy stories of ideas; stories with a strong dramatic flavor; stories containing an occasional thrill; in a nutshell, stories different from those found in the usual magazine.

There are thousands upon thousands of such readers in this country—readers to whom the word "smart" in its best sense of acuteness, nimble-mindedness, up-to-dateness, makes a strong appeal—yet who are not ultra in any respect. These are the readers we want, even though they may not be ahead of modern literary currents. We shall be satisfied if they are merely abreast—with us.

(signed) John Adams Thayer
Publisher *The Smart Set*

With the April issue a namby-pamby (in comparison) magazine appeared. It was nothing. Mencken and Nathan were still star contributors and they did not feel the blight that had fallen upon the magazine, or, if they did, their work didn't show it.* Three months later Europe was at war. There was a panic in Wall Street. Thayer lost a lot of money. Credit tightened and a paper company to which the magazine was heavily indebted took over the property. Eltinge F. Warner, publisher of the very successful *Field & Stream*, was put in as publisher by the paper company in which he owned stock. Warner was looking for a new editor of *The Smart Set* after a return from abroad and, on looking

* Ben Hecht alleges that Mencken was so afraid of the Comstocks that he always changed "night" to "evening" because he thought "night" was suggestive of carnality. But Hecht exaggerates.

over the list of contributors of the magazine of which he was to become the publisher, recognized the name of George Jean Nathan as that of a man he had met on the *Imperator* who had on a surtout made of the same material and by the same tailor as the one Warner wore. He offered Nathan the editorship and Nathan agreed but only on the condition that H. L. Mencken would be co-editor. Arrangements were made and negotiations concluded.

"Mencken did not abjure his Baltimore citizenship," writes Dr. Goldberg in *The Man Mencken*. "The arrangement was that Nathan should be in charge of the office in New York and that Mencken should come up from Baltimore, where he did the scouting for manuscripts, once or twice a month. In every respect the partnership was a finely balanced affair. Warner had made over the same amount of capital stock to Nathan as to Mencken; in the same way, the editors divided their authority and their revenue from possible profits. By the wisdom of Warner's business policies they were soon released for the most efficient conduct of their special duties. There was a heavy floating debt to be paid off; only a radical decrease in expenses enabled the new regime to pay off within a year debts inherited from Thayer and establish the magazine on a firm financial basis. They left a \$5,000 a year office for one that cost \$35 a month. They 'fired' all assistants except a stenographer. The first year the editors worked for nothing. Authors received checks immediately upon acceptance of their manuscripts, regardless of the eventual date of publication. Printers and paper mills were paid promptly. No new capital was absorbed. Warner was the unquestioned business head; Mencken and Nathan were the unquestioned editorial chiefs."

Thus began a collaboration for ten years that is unique in American literary history, important in the development of literary taste and freedom, and memorable in the service it performed of giving a hearing to the work of new and talented writers. The work of the men in those days was prodigious. Mencken, in addition to his editorial and advisory work on *The Baltimore Sun* and that of the compilation of his books, read all of the manuscripts submitted to *The Smart Set*, wrote for it voluminously under pseudonyms, and maintained a staggering correspondence with aspiring young authors all over the country. This personal correspondence was part of Mencken's scouting work and there were few newspaper reporters, fledgling writers, book reviewers and other possible sources of literary material for *The Smart Set* who

did not boast of a number of personal letters from Mencken, characteristically brief and characteristically funny—usually with religious leaflets of ludicrous advertisements inclosed, and signed with a "Yours in Xt." Mencken explained to me once that his vast correspondence was pure business; it brought him manuscripts which he could buy cheaply and it made friends for the magazine and advertised himself as well.

Nathan, in addition to his syndicate work, his occasional articles for other magazines, his associate editorship of *Judge*, his theatrical department for *The Smart Set* and the compilation of his books, read all the manuscripts Mencken thought fit to print. Those Nathan liked were accepted at once; those he did not like were rejected. The point is that both men had to agree on the manuscript before it was bought and the further point is that both men were almost perfect complements of each other—Nathan, the New Yorker and man-of-the-world with interests predominantly esthetic and hedonistic, not at all concerned with sociological or political matters, although quick to see the fallacies and weak points in the arguments of demagogues, Utopians and intellectuals with single-track minds and maliciously shrewd in pointing these fallacies out; and Mencken, a sturdy bourgeois provincial, with a passion for music, an enormous talent for arranging words effectively, a great gusto in living, an enthusiasm for literature, a fair sense of values, and a hearty delight in the more absurd antics of politicians and reformers.

Mencken and Nathan got an immense amount of fun out of their jobs. Editing and writing was, to them, a lark. They did not take literature or the arts with the awful seriousness of some college professors and editors of highbrow magazines and they came finally to puncture the pretensions of the pedants with such unfailing regularity that it would have been a surprise to see one of them intimate that a professor was not necessarily a fool or to suggest that any college course, even in law or surgery, was not a waste of time. Buffoonery and good sense were so inextricably mixed up in their minds that I don't think they always knew when they were kidding and when they were speaking the wise word in jest.

This play-spirit of theirs in their work; their insistence that life and literature are vitally connected one with the other and that literature is not solely a bequest of the past but in a continuous process of being created—all this attracted to *The Smart Set* a great deal of the fresh

and original talent cropping up over the country. Moreover *The Smart Set* was the one and only place where many writers could sell the stuff they particularly liked and wanted to write. Some who had acquired the knack of turning out formula fiction for the commercial magazines wrote for *The Smart Set* what they had seen, felt, experienced and transmuted into imaginative prose. Some could write good work acceptable to *The Smart Set* but no other kind. When the magazine was sold to Hearst, these writers no longer had a market for their wares.

In those early days of the Mencken and Nathan collaboration they were greatly addicted to horse-play. They refused to take themselves seriously; and, in consequence very few others did, except petty-minded professors and pulpiteers who saw in Mencken and Nathan dangerous influences upon the minds and morals of the young. Their enemies, that is to say nearly all of those in the strategic positions of power and respectability, found their efforts to ignore or belittle Mencken and Nathan were ineffectual. Professor Henry W. Boynton at the University of Chicago, before he swung around with the growing parade instead of against it, had thought to devastate Mencken and Nathan and the writers they praised with the epithet, "the tart set"; and Professor Stuart P. Sherman of the University of Illinois, before he swung around and praised Dreiser, Anderson, Lewis and other writers he had previously denounced, sought to devastate them, in war time, by strongly hinting that they were alien, un-American and Bolshevik and should be run out of the country—thus somewhat confirming Mencken's allegation that the average American likes to fight with the enemy strapped to the boards.

V

IN November, 1917, I wrote an article for *The Chicago Sunday Tribune* under the title, "Fanfare," apropos of the publication of Mencken's *A Book of Prefaces*. It was the first lengthy appreciation of Mencken's merits to appear in this country, the first attempt to place him as the important figure in American letters he was later generally conceded to be, the first article, in fact, to treat him seriously and with respect. Two years after this, only one other critic had written an article treating Mencken as a stylist and as a writer to be reckoned with, not as a cheap-jack and a buffoon. That was Vincent O'Sullivan. His article appeared in *The New Witness*, G. K. Chesterton's weekly in London. Meantime Mencken had published *The American Language*, an important

philological work; a new book of criticism under the title, *Prejudices: First Series*; a satire, *In Defense of Women*; and, in collaboration with Nathan, he had published a farce called *Heliogabalus*, and the two had issued *The American Credo*.

Mencken wrote to me in 1919 asking permission to reprint *Fanfare* in a pamphlet. I not only granted him this permission but told him I would expand it, bringing it up to date and including some biographical data, if he would furnish it. I sent the expanded article to him gratis and with all good will. The paper was printed together with O'Sullivan's article and a bibliography signed by F. C. Henderson. It was issued in 1920 on old rose red laid paper under the title, *H. L. Mencken*, with the subtitles, *Fanfare* by Burton Rascoe, *The American Critic* by Vincent O'Sullivan, *Bibliography* by F. C. Henderson. The pamphlet was not copyrighted. Permission was not asked of *The Chicago Tribune* which owns a blanket copyright on all of its issues; and *The Chicago Tribune's* copyright was not indicated, thereby invalidating the copyright on the article.* In the bibliography of Mencken's writings compiled by Carroll Frey and issued by the Centaur Bookshop, Philadelphia, in 1924, this pamphlet is described in full with the added comment:

"This was issued by Knopf by way of publicity, and the edition was quickly exhausted.

"Note: It was considered advisable to include a complete collation of the above item owing to its importance to the Mencken collector. This pamphlet is sometimes referred to as *Fanfare*."

I should not consider it proper to mention, also, that I was paid nothing by Alfred A. Knopf or by Mencken for my contribution to this pamphlet, if an ironical situation had not arisen when Mr. Conklin and I sought permissions from authors and publishers for work to be included in this anthology. All of the authors, but one, whose permission we particularly sought granted it with enthusiasm, Mencken being the one exception. All, but one, of the publishers controlling copyrights, whose permissions were necessary, also granted them with grace and alacrity, Alfred A. Knopf being the one exception.

I had written to Carl Van Vechten asking his permission to include

*This means the article and the pamphlet may now be reprinted by anybody legally, without my consent and without payment to me.

an essay which had appeared in *The Smart Set* and later included in a book issued by Knopf. Mr. Van Vechten readily granted the permission, expressed enthusiasm about the project, and asked me to use the book text rather than the magazine text because the latter contained some improvement on the original, offering to send me a copy of the book for the printer's text. He told me it was necessary to get Knopf's permission since the latter controlled the copyright.

Knopf granted the permission and sent me the necessary papers to sign, indicating the amount to be paid, the use to which the material was to be put, and other details. The next day a letter arrived from Knopf saying that since granting the permission he had learned that H. L. Mencken was not to be represented in the anthology and that, on talking it over with Mr. Van Vechten, Mr. Van Vechten had decided that he did not want to appear in a *Smart Set* anthology in which Mencken was not represented.

It was not clear from Knopf's letter whether his information was that Mencken had been ignored in our asking for material to be used in the anthology or that Mencken had been invited and had declined. I hastened to assure Knopf and Van Vechten that the latter was the case. Mencken declined to grant permission to use anything of his in the anthology, stating that much of the *Smart Set* stuff was "vealy" and the work he wished to preserve was already available in copyrighted books. If this were to be taken literally it would mean that Mencken does not wish to preserve *George Bernard Shaw: His Plays*, *A Little Book in C Major*, *Damn: A Book of Calumny*, *Men vs. The Man*, *Heliogabalus*, *Europe After 8:15*, and *The Philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche*, all of which have been allowed to go out of print. Some of the material in these books is excellent and first appeared in *The Smart Set*. Mr. Eltinge F. Warner was kind enough to grant us a blanket permission to use any material that appeared in *The Smart Set* while he controlled the majority stock. We could, therefore, if we chose, legally include some work by Mencken in this anthology. We think it is better, however, to respect the author's wishes in regard to work he does not care to have revived, even if we disagree with him on its merits. And it is assuredly true that if any one, upon reading this anthology should feel a great lack because of the absence of a characteristic Mencken article, we can say that we feel (in a modified manner) this lack also; but we take comfort in knowing that we can readily satisfy our thirst for Mencken by turning to one of the books still in print and copy-

righted by Knopf or by turning the pages of *Liberty*, one of the Bernarr Macfadden magazines.

I was curious after receiving a second letter from Mr. Knopf and asked him if his letter meant that he would deny us permission to include any material in the anthology over which he controlled copyright, even when we had the enthusiastic consent of the authors. Mr. Knopf did not content himself with being explicit in stating such was his intention. He also went so far as to forget himself and offer me his unsolicited opinion of a *Smart Set* anthology in which Mencken is not appearing. He seems to have imagined that the anthology was confined to material printed during the time when Mencken was one of the editors, and he may also have imagined that he, as a publisher, controlled copyright on much of the material we sought.

As a matter of fact, the only other Knopf author whose copyrights Knopf controls which we particularly wanted, besides Mencken, was Thyra Samter Winslow. She was a brilliant adornment to the old *Smart Set*: nearly all of her best work was bought and published by Mencken and Nathan; her acid observations on the cattiness of women toward one another, her realistic treatment of domestic difficulties, and her keen sharp portrayals of human vanity, selfishness and ambition give her high ranking among modern short story writers. Any one of a dozen or more of her *Smart Set* stories are worthy of inclusion in any short story anthology.

Mrs. Winslow, as an old *Smart Set* fan, was congratulatory over the news that such an anthology was to be brought out and said she was eager and flattered to be included. We had thought of using either "Cycle of Manhattan" even though it was already included in several anthologies including Carl Van Doren's *Modern American Prose* or "The Pier Glass." We found that those stories are copyrighted by Knopf under the title, *Picture Frames*. I informed Mrs. Winslow that Knopf had flatly denied us permission to use any material over which he controls copyright, no matter whether the author was eager to be included or not. Mrs. Winslow was amazed and angered but quickly solved the problem. She said that several of the stories she particularly liked and wanted included in *Picture Frames* had to be left out for reasons of space and that she would send me these and that if any was worthy of inclusion in the anthology she did not want to be left out. She sent us three *Smart Set* stories that I had missed reading—all three excellent. We chose "Orphant Annie."

I have often been asked, probably because of my long acquaintance with both men and my familiarity with their work, what was the cause of the break between Mencken and Nathan. I don't know; but I do know that on Mencken's part it has been complete, uncompromising and, as the above singular action on Knopf's part of once granting and then withdrawing copyright permission, appears almost vindictive. In all the conversations I have had with Nathan from the time the break was supposed to have occurred until the other day, he had given me no indication that a rupture of their long friendship had ever occurred: his references to Mencken have always been as affable and affectionate as they ever were.

On Mencken's part there was a sentence in his letter refusing to participate in the anthology which may or may not be indicative of his mood. I had told him that I wanted to make up the table of contents of the anthology somewhat along the line of the regular make-up of the *Smart Set*, beginning with a "short," following with a novelette, alternate briefs and longer pieces, a *Répetition Générale* in about the middle, some of the best stuff in the back, one of the conversations (which have never been reprinted) with Nathan, and closing with a typical Nathan essay on the theater and a typical Mencken review. For the last I suggested "Mr. Veblen and the Cow," as one of the best remembered. Mencken wrote me that he presumed by "Conversations" I meant the series in which he collaborated with Nathan (which I did, of course) and that, if so, "I ceased to collaborate with Nathan ten years ago and I have no wish to resume."

This statement seemed odd. I had not asked him to collaborate with Nathan, nor to resume an old collaboration. I had merely asked permission to include a joint-work of the two men, accomplished in the past and now a matter of literary history, whatever the present relationship between them should happen to be. Nathan had already given me his permission to use any of the "Conversations" (alleged to have been taken down by Capt. Owen Hatteras) that I wanted. Later I learned that by an old agreement either Mencken or Nathan could dispose of any work on which they had collaborated, without consulting the other; and that Nathan's permission was all that was needed to include any one or all of the "Conversations" in the anthology. (These pieces are excellent comedy dialogue, by the way, and they throw much light on the temperaments and characteristics of the two men.) To be consistent, Mencken should withdraw

The American Credo which is still in print and on the title page of which he appeared as collaborator, although the book is largely the work of Nathan; and he should also discontinue to list the book among "The Works of H. L. Mencken" printed on the fly-leaf of his books.

Despite this little contretemps, one which saddened me rather than inconvenienced me because it brought home too poignantly how time and temperaments can affect the closest and most productive friendships, the editing of this anthology has been a pleasure. Those of us in the late thirties or in the early forties (as I am), who were aware of literature at all in high school and college, recall the excitement with which we awaited the appearance of *The Smart Set* on the stands. Not many people subscribed to the magazine because it might make you lose face if you did so; and most of us were careful to keep our copies out of the sight of our parents or teachers. But they were treasured and discussed and we oldsters were happy and pleased in the 'Twenties when it came to be quite all right to be seen reading *The Smart Set*, to find so many youngsters not only developing their literary tastes through the magazine but also imitating in college papers and in book reviews the belligerency of Mencken and the pointed sarcasm of Nathan and helping themselves to the vocabularies of both. Young Mr. F. Scott Fitzgerald was blazing forth in *The Smart Set* along with other new luminaries.

VI

THE idea of the anthology was Mr. Conklin's. I first got wind of it nearly five years ago when he wrote to me, telling me he was gathering material for such an anthology and asking for permission to use a little fiction bit I had had in *The Smart Set*. I heard nothing more from Mr. Conklin until a few months ago. It appears that he had been working off and on all that time, reading the magazines, getting his permissions and gathering his material by copying and photostating. The trouble was that he had assembled enough material not for one anthology but for ten—all of it readable, much of it excellent, nearly all of it hitherto unpublished except in the pages of *The Smart Set*. Here was a great mass of work by writers now famous which had never got into books. Some of it, no doubt, had been forgotten by the authors; some of it overlooked by the literary administrators of authors now dead; some of it (as we learned) fledgling work which, though good and indicative of the authors' talents, the authors no longer consider

"representative" and prefer to leave them buried in old files; others by authors whose writing careers were brilliant but brief and who never were encouraged by publishers to bring out their work in book form, because of the notorious prejudice against books of short stories.

The thing to do was to select and edit it and this I was asked by Reynal & Hitchcock to do, with Mr. Conklin's help. Happily I did not have to re-read much of the material: I remembered nearly all of it. I have an almost complete file of *The Smart Set* going back to 1911. I had my favorites vividly remembered through these years. I remembered many things connected with stories and articles. I remembered that Mencken had written to James Branch Cabell and had asked him if he had any material which might be available for *The Smart Set* and that Cabell had forthwith produced "Some Ladies and Jurgen" and sent it to Mencken because, as Cabell wrote me, "he seemed to deserve it." And that this short story was the embryo out of which *Jurgen* was evolved, a novel which, Cabell wrote me, "seems to have written itself" after he had done several things, including writing the middle before the beginning or the end and the beginning last of all, from *The Smart Set* story.

I remembered being on from Chicago one time and of going up to Nathan's apartment at the Royalton for a visit and cocktails. Nathan said he had just bought a short story he would like me to read, it would take only a few minutes. He passed the manuscript to me with the title page already folded over, along with the slip-cover of the manuscript, so I could begin the text at once. When I had finished I let out an exclamation of delight and told him it was a "whizz" or a "knockout" or something of the sort. "Another version of 'Thais' " I remarked, "but what a beauty!"

"I think it is the best story we have ever received at *The Smart Set*, don't you?"

"I don't know what you have received at *The Smart Set* but it will be one of the best you have ever published."

"Guess who the author is?"

"No idea."

"Somerset Maugham."

"Naw. How can you pay Somerset Maugham's prices? I thought your top was about a hundred dollars and you pay Ben Hecht and me thirty-five to fifty." (Maugham was even then a highly successful playwright; he was famous as the author of *Of Human Bondage*; his

Moon and Sixpence had been a best seller; and he was selling to *Cosmopolitan*; and Ray Long was supposed to be paying him \$1,500 to \$2,500 for every story or article he sent in.)

"We got this for \$200. Long turned it down and after him so did everybody else. We are the last ones Paul Reynolds thinks of because of our word rate, so he came to us last. We offered him two hundred, and there it is."

The story was *Miss Thompson* which was made into the play called *Rain*. It may also be interesting to record that when John Williams cabled Maugham asking him to make the short story into a play and let him produce it, Maugham, although a proficient playwright, cabled back that *Miss Thompson* was a short story and did not lend itself to adaptation for the stage. Williams then cabled Maugham for the rights to adapt the story and got them gratis, and with Maugham's doubting best wishes. Maugham did not even come over for the rehearsals, thinking the play would flop. He came over to attend the opening of another play he himself had written and it was a failure. Down the street a few blocks *Rain* was selling out and continued to sell out for a record run.

I remember Ben Hecht of the fertile imagination, the macabre invention, the coruscating adjectives and a whole posse of creditors, turning out two and three short stories a week, accepted and paid for by Mencken and Nathan, and run under three or four different names made up in the office. Hecht had as many as four stories in one issue, only one signed by his own name.

And through the years I have remembered "The End of Ilsa Menteith" by Lilith Benda, a frequent contributor to the old *Smart Set*, who suddenly stopped writing for no accountable reason. I learned that her real name is Lucia Bronder and I had difficulty in locating her to get her permission to reprint the story. Finally I had to ask for her whereabouts through the columns of the New York Herald Tribune. In a gracious letter granting permission she said she might write again some day but that she found writing difficult.

Willard Huntington Wright after setting the pace for *The Smart Set* went abroad to study and write. In four years' time he produced seven books including *Modern Painting*, *What Nietzsche Taught*, *A Man of Promise* (novel), *The Creative Will*, *Misinforming a Nation*, and *Informing a Nation*, and edited two anthologies. He over-worked and suffered a general breakdown in health from which he was many years recover-

ing. In the process of recovery he was permitted by his doctor to read nothing heavier than detective stories and, thus occupied, he read practically every detective story ever printed in three languages. Then he tried writing them himself. When his *The Canary Murder Case* was serialized in Scribner's magazine it caused a great increase in the circulation of that magazine and when issued in book form it was a best seller. Since then he has devoted his time to writing best-selling detective stories, raising Scotties, and cultivating tropical fish in his magnificent penthouse overlooking Central Park.

I know the cause of the break between Wright and Mencken. When the war was on, but before we had got into it, Wright was pro-German, as, indeed, was Mencken; and they had every right to be. We were officially neutral but many were pro-German in sympathy but still more were pro-Ally. We got into the war because there were more pro-Allies than pro-Germans, that is all. But so effective was British propaganda in this country and so blundering was German propaganda that, long before we got into the war, Department of Justice agents were acting as though we were already in the war on the side of the Allies and making things very difficult for pro-Germans while making things easy for the pro-Allies.

Wright was literary editor of the *New York Evening Mail*, a newspaper later found to be subsidized by German money. Suspicion that such was the case had entered the heads of Department of Justice agents. Mencken knew the managing editor and had got Wright his job, a job Wright very much needed because he was broken in purse and health. Wright had a secretary whom he discovered to be opening his personal mail and acting suspiciously toward him. He noticed too that she kept carbons when he told her she needn't. He dictated to her a crazy letter—the sort a spy might dictate in a detective story—and told her not to keep a copy and then watched to see what she would do. She grabbed her notebook as soon as he had finished and ran out into the street calling for the police. Wright was detained, questioned, released; and then fired by Rumley. I saw him in Chicago on his way to California. The Kaiser mustache had gone long ago; he now wore a full, red, saintly beard, trimmed to a point. In San Francisco he got a job as music critic for the *Bulletin*. Visiting Los Angeles, he recanted on "Los Angeles: the Chemically Pure" in an interview and said Los Angeles was full of lovely people and sunshine.

In that silly letter full of ridiculous mumble-bumble Wright used a

couple of names that had occurred to him, cryptically. One of them was a friend of Mencken's in the State Department at Washington. Wright's nonsense gave Mencken's friend some uncomfortable moments. Mencken had got Wright the job; Mencken considered Wright had wronged a friend. So Mencken would have nothing more to do with Wright.

So, when I am asked what caused the break between Mencken and Nathan I must reply that I don't know. I asked Nathan recently and he replied that there was no break as far as he was concerned; and that the only thing he could figure out that had made Mencken sore at him was something he said, in a jest, about Mencken's collar. "He thought I was making fun of him and got very angry," said Nathan. But this sounds so preposterous that it must be dismissed as improbable; unless you happen to think the causes of Mencken's breaks with Wright and Dreiser are improbable. Differences of opinion may have been at the root of it.

But it was a shame that this break with Wright and Nathan should have happened. Mencken used to stand in great awe of Nathan as a polished man of the world, a fencer, a dancer, a good dresser, a connoisseur of the more subtle delights of literature and the arts; and Nathan used to stand in great awe of Mencken, very much as an intellectual and neurotic blasé aristocrat might stand in awe of a shrewd, hearty, simple, direct, uncomplex and noble peasant. I speak in hyperbole of course, but in that hyperbole I mean to indicate how much they balanced each other as collaborators. After their split, without Nathan's aesthetic interests as a balance, *The American Mercury* degenerated into a tiresome sort of yokel-baiting. And since Mencken resigned, the magazine, editorially and critically, has become only the placenta of Mencken. Brave aims, even long pursued and long sustained, have a distressing habit of tiring out the way *The Smart Set* curled up and went to Hearst. Nathan, the only stylist among dramatic critics except Percy Hammond, now edits *The American Spectator* with Ernest Boyd, Eugene O'Neill, Sherwood Anderson and James Branch Cabell, writes about the theater for *Judge*, contributes to other magazines here and abroad, and produces a book every year. To him we owe the deepest thanks for his courtesy, kindness and suggestions while we were compiling this anthology.

Meanwhile herein are presented some of the bright spots when *The Smart Set* was an intellectual treat. On going over the material for final selection I was amazed to discover how little the stuff had "dated." That means that the life that was in *The Smart Set* stories,

"SMART SET" HISTORY

ems is the life of true literature. For old-time's sake we
as souvenirs, a collection of those brash, Nietzschean
shorts on men, women, love and marriage that once
ng to Middle-West maidens and so full of true wisdom to
iores.

e moment this appears in print the relations between
myself to all intents and purposes are of long-standing
t cordial sort; I have a profound admiration for what he
t he has done; I have had an affection for the man; I
: for the pleasure his books have given me and for the
timation I have derived from *The Smart Set* when he
: editors. But I suspect that I shall not clink steins with
beer saloon any more and hear him bellow and pound
act, well. . . .

New York,

1, 1934.

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it has had previous book publication)

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The

SMART SET

Anthology

ORPHANT ANNIE

by Thyra Samter Winslow

CHAPTER I

YESTERDAY, for the first time in perhaps, yes, at least five years, I saw Annie Robinson. Seeing her startled me just a little. It brought back so many things, mostly about Annie herself.

Strangely, Annie had not changed in the five years since I last saw her, nor, for that matter, was she in any outward way different from the Annie of five years before that, when I first met her. Somehow, when we see old friends, after a space of years, we expect to see upon them some definite signs of disintegration and decay, even while each of us says to himself, "I haven't gone down like that—why, I've hardly changed at all—in years."

Perhaps there were signs of age in Annie that I did not observe, but the usual signs were missing. There were no sagging of throat muscles, or lines around the eyes, or loosening of contour. She was, so far as I could tell, the same Orphant Annie of Rutgers & Olds, Advertising; Bingham & Son, Brokers—the others.

"How are you, Annie?" I asked. "What have you been doing?" The usual questions.

She was quite well, she told me. Yes, she was still working—had an awfully good position—confidential secretary to S. B. Hubbard of the S. B. Hubbard Company. Yes, her family was well. Did I remember Ethel, her sister? Ethel was married—an awfully nice chap—they were housekeeping—an apartment in West Seventy-eighth Street. Lester was married, too. Yes, thank you, her father was better—he always felt better when warm weather came. The family was living on Long Island, now. Yes, they were buying a home in Flushing—liked it there, awfully well—the country air was good for her mother, too. Yes, it was pleasant, after all these years. . . .

Looking at Orphant Annie, and later, thinking about her, after we parted, her story came back to me, much as stories often come back to us, pieced out, a patchquilt of information and hints and intuitions. Paths cross and break, a stranger, here, offers his bit of color, an old acquaintance, two months later, fits in a missing pattern. Annie . . .

She was nicknamed Orphant Annie when I first met her, at Rutgers &

Olds. I've no idea that the nickname stuck to her nor that anyone else remembers it. She was named, perhaps, because of the old jest—that she was not an orphan. At that, she had supposed orphan-like attributes. She was, as she is now, a little thing, slender, with grey eyes set wide apart. Although she is, in a way, even plump, because she is small-boned she has always given the impression of extreme fragility. She was, and is, pale, too, though her mouth is full and ripe-looking. Her face is a bit broad, her cheek-bones a trifle high for artistic perfection. Her skin is smooth and delicate-looking and her hair an unnoticeable light brown and straight. Her nose is slender and straight, with just a suspicion of a tilt to it, and, though her hips and waist are slender, her breasts are well rounded.

I wonder if I have given you a complete enough description. Perhaps her greatest characteristic is that, when you first meet her, she seems to fade completely into her background. It is only after you have seen her often, a dozen times, that she becomes complete, a person. Her clothes, of the most modest type, her soft voice, her little air of self-depreciation, all add to her neutral qualities, on first acquaintance. She is the type of whom it is so natural to say:

"Don't mind Miss Robinson, my confidential secretary, you know; say what you like in front of her—"

One, then, does ignore Annie, quite logically, at first. It is only at subsequent meetings that Annie's personality unfolds, that she becomes even Orphant Annie—Orphant Annie of a tenement in Sixteenth Street, an apartment uptown, now, a home in Flushing, Long Island. Orphant Annie—the perfect flower of our best urban civilization.

CHAPTER II

ANNIE ROBINSON was born in Tenth Street. She never remembered the house in which she was born, but it is safe to say that it was much like those which became subsequently her homes. By the time she was fourteen and began to think seriously about things, the family had progressed uptown as far as West Sixteenth Street. The house she lived in, which resembled every other house in which Annie had ever lived in, except in street number, was of dingy red brick, called, by courtesy, an apartment house. The difference between it and a tenement was, perhaps, an almost imperceptible degree of cleanliness, an attempt at janitor service, an every-third-year papering and painting. The house was one of a long row of four-storied houses, which, in a previous, more prosperous era, had been "private homes," each house being

occupied, unbelievable to the present tenants, by a single family. Now, each house was divided and subdivided, made over into apartments by the additions of kitchens, hall toilets and running water on each floor. Each floor was given over to one or two families, depending upon the comparative opulence of the occupants.

The first floor fronts had not been remodeled. Each house still had a neat bay window to the left of the once-white stone steps. Now, each bay window inevitably gave signs of a more commercial tenancy than the original dwellers could ever have dreamed of. Dingy hair-dyeing establishments, doubtful beauty parlors, doctors of little-known but vaguely unpleasant diseases were sandwiched between purveyors of imitation pearls and of other wares far less genuine.

Children were always tumbling out of the doors of these houses or getting under the feet of pedestrians. They were well-nourished children, their paleness due more to over- than to under-feeding. They were always dressed in rather thick, unfitting clothes with soiled neckbands. Their stockings were forever coming down, their hair rough, their noses unpleasantly moist. They were usually sucking too-red lollipops or hinting for pennies for a new supply. They were sometimes accompanied by dogs of spiritless disposition and uncertain breed which ran mostly to short grey hair, occasionally black spotted.

This, then, was the atmosphere in which Annie Robinson lived until and when she was fourteen. Her own family lived in the third floor front of one of the red houses. The family had three rooms. The front room, logically called "the front room," was the living-room and served as a bedroom for the two daughters, Annie and Ethel, who slept together on the wide cot which served, day times, disguised with a rather dirty half of a pair of portieres, as a couch. There was a big red-plush rocker in the room, outlined elaborately with machine carving, three smaller chairs of lesser beauty, a big golden oak table with carved legs and, in the corner, a sort of whatnot, a bit wobbly, bought, second-hand a few years before and containing various art treasures: an enormous shell, a doll from Coney Island, a small set of dishes with handle-less cups and a book of Whittier's poems, mysteriously come by. There was a red rug in the room, violently patterned in spots but worn in other places to a softer gentility, torn, near the door, where you were apt to get your foot caught, if you happened to forget it.

The second room, opening off this, with the other half of the pair of portieres ready to provide privacy, if ever necessary, was the bedroom of Mr. and Mrs. Robinson. The furniture here was, on account

of the size of the room, necessarily limited to a huge brass bed and a less elegant chest of drawers. Maud, the youngest child, also shared this room with her parents until she was about seven, when she moved into the front room with her sisters.

The third room was the kitchen, complete with stove, sink and table. The family ate in the kitchen. In the general hall were the necessary toilet facilities. The hall and the stairs were always dark, lit by a small, flickering gas flame and full of a horrible mingling of smells, each one unpleasant.

The head of the house was most inappropriately named Harold, which had shortened to Hal and which seemed to fit him poorly enough, even then. He was a big man, with a sort of pulpy quality. In his youth he had been a longshoreman and exceedingly proud of his muscle. As with many longshoremen, he had taken up boxing as a fad. He had belonged to several athletic clubs, which had combined politics and sports most advantageously to both elements. He had been a big fellow with long arms, but not especially "game" or courageous. He had never become more than a fairly interesting amateur. He had a quarrelsome nature that prevented those higher up from taking an interest in him. He was forever engaging in some long and stupid dispute. He always "had it in" for someone or was "getting ready to settle with that fellow."

After his marriage, the occupation of longshoreman became too strenuous for him. Gradually, his muscle disappeared and in its place came unhealthy-looking fat. Now, he was employed in the freight department of one of the big steamship companies whose docks extend, stretched out for blocks, along the North River. He was always getting rheumatism, complaining that he couldn't work along the river, laying off, spending a couple of weeks at home as a most quarrelsome and cursing invalid, and then, when the money disappeared, getting another job at the docks. There really was nothing else, now, that he could do. He walked with a peculiar swaying, boneless sort of gait and his skin, though tanned, had a spongy quality, too. His nose was large and red-veined. His mouth had a childish, weak-looking expression and his chin was a series of loose, pulp-like folds. His hair was light and thin—he was bald at forty—and his eyes were small and light and weak, too.

Mrs. Robinson had come from slightly better stock, though she, as well as her husband, had been born in New York's East Side. She had

married Robinson when he was a husky and athletic longshoreman. She had admired him tremendously and had felt unbelievably happy and lucky when she found that he really wanted to marry her. Never very bright nor acquisitive and believing that the man, especially her man, was head of the family, she had, through years of child-bearing and motherhood and housework, lapsed into an almost silent, rather timid wisp of a woman. She always felt lucky because she didn't have to go to work, the way so many married women did. Her husband supported her, he did! Even Robinson's gradual disintegration did not bother her. She had always been taken care of—she'd be looked out for.

She had simple beliefs. She did her buying of clothes at the end of the season and put them away for the next year, when she could. You got better material that way. She thought that a girl who had "gone wrong" was better off dead. She dismissed every new idea—and this included night school, music, books of all kinds and everything with any possible cultural trend as "nonsense." She saw that her children had one good hot meal a day—usually a stew—and she drank innumerable cups of tea and coffee. One or the other of these beverages was always simmering on her kitchen stove.

Lester was the oldest of the family. Two years older than Annie, at sixteen, he was starting to be "wild," not an entirely undesirable trait in a boy, his parents felt. He hung around the corner cigar store and poolroom, smoked cigarettes and made remarks about girls. He worked, with fair stability, in a paper box factory, but had already been in one shady deal, which required police investigation and ended in a warning.

Annie followed Lester in age, to be followed in turn by Ethel, who at twelve was still at the loose-socking, moist-nose age. So was Frank, who was ten, and, nights, with Lester, slept in the kitchen. Maud, about seven, was the beauty of the family and had thin, pale curls. There had been a younger child who had died.

Annie, at fourteen, was pale and thin and mouse-like, no more noticeable at first glance than later. There is no reason to start her history at fourteen, in fact, save that at that age she made to her parents her first unusual and unassisted request. Needless to say it was dismissed immediately.

Annie dared to ask that she be allowed to go to High School! High School, mind you! When the family had been waiting for her to "graduate" from the public school so she could start to work. One can start

to work when one has reached the age of sixteen, no matter what one's scholastic accomplishments, or, more grandly, at whatever younger age one may have finished the work laid out by the Board of Education for the Grammar Schools. Annie was graduated from School Number One Hundred Something, a dingy, red-brick school with a treeless, grassless yard when she was fourteen. Instead of great joy at this release from a formal education she had actually asked to go on—to go to High School. Three weeks later she had a very good job in a paper pattern house in lower Sixth Avenue.

CHAPTER III

THE family watched Annie a bit closely for a while. Something unusual, here. Still, she seemed all right. There were no outbursts. She brought her money home, regularly, Saturdays, and only made the usual requests for unnecessary finery. Of course, she did take walks by herself way over to Fifth Avenue—and to Fourteenth Street—you got to watch girls like that—Fourteenth Street at night is no place for a young girl, alone—might go wrong—still, outside of that. It wasn't as if Annie was one of these flashy girls—a quiet little thing like Annie—

If it hadn't been for those walks, Annie might have settled down to years of the factory by day, neighborhood gossip or boys from the factory or neighborhood by night, a courtship, then, kissed in dark, unsavory halls, amusements at places just a trifle more pleasant, marriage, another dingy apartment, children. But Fourteenth was but two blocks to the South—and Fifth Avenue just a little more than two long blocks away.

Funny, Annie thought, even then, why so few of the girls she knew ever walked over to Fifth Avenue. Her own home was just West of Seventh Avenue. The girls walked farther every day. They walked as far East as Sixth, all the time. Somehow, something about Fifth frightened them. It didn't frighten Annie. She liked the width of it and the quiet and the dignified, smooth traffic—the buses. She went for bus rides, by herself, Saturday afternoons and Sundays. The girls she knew didn't think that was any fun. It wasn't fun, exactly. It wasn't that. It left you even unhappier than you were when you started. Yet it drove you on. Seated on top of a bus, Saturday afternoon, her clothes never quite warm enough except in the warmest weather, Annie drank in what she saw—the people mostly. Not that her thoughts

about them were kind and gentle, nor even just mildly curious. She hated them all. One after another.

"How I hate that old thing," she would mutter about a woman, fur clad, and not necessarily old. "Nasty little child," she'd say to herself, "nasty, fat little thing."

She would poke her nose in the air disdainfully at people in automobiles and think, "I hate you, old fools," after they had passed.

Yet, too, she had a sharp curiosity about these very people. As the bus jogged up Fifth Avenue or Riverside Drive she would peer into apartment-house windows. In winter, when the days grew dark early, she was glad when folks forgot to pull down the window shades.

"Lace curtains," she'd tell herself, "big pictures there, in wide gold frames—a big blue lamp shade—rich folks," and then, "Gee, I hate them all. They don't know me, not one of them."

Sometimes she would, wistfully, put herself in the way of people, hoping to be discovered, somehow, a West Sixteenth Street Cinderella. She would be pushed aside with a careless, "look where you're going, child." No one ever discovered her.

She even tried to pretend that she was adopted, asked her mother artful questions that might lead to a disclosure of her true origin. Well she knew that the Robinsons wouldn't have adopted anyone. There were too many Robinsons as it was. She looked too much like Ethel and Frank to be an adopted child, anyhow.

Annie grew ambitious in an unformed sort of way, restless, perhaps, more than ambitious. If she had had money, a few decent pleasures, a fairly comfortable home, she might have been satisfied. Folding paper patterns in a Sixth Avenue loft by day, not especially savory food and West Sixteenth Street by night did not make life seem especially complete at fourteen.

Annie kept to the pattern of things. It's hard to break away at fourteen, at fifteen, even. She grew a bit sullen, a bit more envious of people who were more prosperous. Now, in Fifth Avenue she would issue pathetic and—she knew it, too—empty defiances to the street and the well-dressed crowds who passed her, there—"you just wait—I'll show you—I'll have nice things—"

How do you get nice things? That's it. Other folks' fathers provide them. Robinson grew more pulpy every day. His periods of being out of work grew longer. His weak, droopy mouth issued more frequent curses. No help there.

Ethel, at fourteen, went to work, too. Ethel was "fresh," a gayer, saucier type than Annie, though looking like her, in a way. Ethel worked at a milliner's and was forever bringing home rather wild and not entirely truthful stories of her adventures. Lester, who had changed jobs several times a year, now clerked in a chain cigar store and assumed a set of manners which fitted not at all with his usual behavior. At eighteen, he had already "got into trouble over a girl" and only the fact that the girl was older than he was and was wild, too, kept him from paying for his folly.

When Annie was sixteen she had passed from the loft in Sixth Avenue to a press clipping bureau and then to a Sixth Avenue department store. She didn't like the department store, really, but it was better than anything she had done. She was a cash girl for the basement aluminum ware and had a promise of being put "on the floor" when she was a year or two older.

Annie disliked the girls she worked with, much as she disliked her neighbors. They seemed stupid, dull, without any sort of an urge or inner feeling. Sometimes she would try to put out feelers, to see if the other girls felt the restless rebellion that she felt so frequently. There was never a response of any kind. They thought the store was "all right," the hours "kind-a-long." They spoke of "fellas" and "steadies" and clothes. Marriage, perhaps only a few years off, was the only thing they looked forward to. Sometimes, looking into their complacent or shallow, petulant faces, Annie wanted to stick pins into them to find out if they would squeal or scream. They laughed at her, called her a queer one, let it go at that.

Annie went to the store's school. She was not especially ambitious, now, in a scholastic way, as she had been at fourteen. Still, the more you know the faster you get ahead. She had a quick mind. She never said much about the school, at home.

When she was seventeen, Annie discovered boys—or boys discovered her. Anyhow, she found herself suddenly with masculine attention. Until then, she hadn't thought much about boys. They were all right, in a way. She hated boys of Lester's type, fresh and forward. She "couldn't stand" the slovenly youths of West Sixteenth Street. She was so quiet and mouse-like that other types never presented themselves to her. Ethel, at fifteen, already had beaux. But then, Ethel was a "fresh kid" and, besides, was satisfied with almost any kind of youthful masculine attention.

At seventeen, Annie found that the peculiar chemistry of sex brought her unconsciously with boys and men. Some young clerk or wrapper or delivery boy was always waiting at the side door of the store for her at closing time. She wasn't one of the "awfully popular" girls, and yet there was always someone.

She liked these boys, for a while. They were "good company." They were full of a sort of comfortable repartee. They took her to the movies, nights, and bought innumerable sodas. Beyond that they could not go. What could they do? Most of them lived at home and helped support a home quite similar to the one Annie came from. They certainly were not marriageable, and, if they had been, the marriage would have meant a transfer from one poor apartment to another. They were a transient pleasure. Some of them got fresh. They didn't get far with Annie. One didn't mind a kiss or two. That sort of paid for the evening's entertainment. They didn't go farther than that. Annie knew how to hold her own. You can't live in West Sixteenth Street without learning something about the world.

Roger Burson clerked in the silk department. He was a most elegant young fellow, with long white fingers. Quite unobtrusively Annie brought herself to his notice. She was clerking in the second-floor dress-notions, now. There was something different about Roger Burson. Annie watched him, when she could, at his work. He unrolled long bolts of silk, letting the material slip through his fingers. She watched him talking to feminine customers—jealous of them as she watched—and was always surprised at his smooth flow of conversation, his little deferences to his customers, his smile. He put back his head and half closed his eyes when he smiled—he seemed mysterious—deep, then. She liked his writing on his checks, a sort of large, clear, round writing. She kept a check that he had written and discarded. She was as familiar with his store number as most girls are with the telephone number of more fortunate young men.

After a seemingly long period of indifference, Burson began paying attention to Annie. He waited for her, after closing hours. She was just a bit dizzy when she saw him waiting, the first time, his sleek brown hair, his slender rather pale face. What a nice fellow he was!

Of course she couldn't ask Burson to call! He lived in an uptown apartment with a widowed mother, who had a little money. She didn't dare let him see the Sixteenth Street apartment. She did meet him, after supper, on several occasions. He took her to the theatre a couple of

times. She encouraged him as much as she could. He held her hand in the theatre. He hinted at further and more violent love-making. What could come of it? He couldn't marry—had to do his share toward supporting his mother—it took all they had just to get along. His conversation was not as thrilling as Annie had hoped it would be. It was quite dull, in fact, little rather feminine gossipy things about the store and about styles, tales of his yearly two weeks' vacation, tales of his bowling club, which met once each week. She tried to get him to talk about some of the vague, restless things that were in her own mind. He never seemed to know what she was talking about.

One warm Spring evening they took a bus-ride to Central Park and then walked through the park slowly. Annie walked close to Burson, took his arm, encouraged him in every way. He kissed her. Oh, what of it? What if he did kiss her? Could anything come of it all? She'd better be careful—falling in love would be easy enough—too easy. That wouldn't get her anywhere. After that, Annie avoided Burson. It was easy enough, after all.

A few nights afterward, Annie, all alone, walked up Fourteenth Street. It was a hot night and the white lights of the street, the cheap colors from the shows and the shop windows seemed suddenly to sicken her. She was eighteen! Eighteen! She used to think, when she was a little girl, that something grand would happen to her. Nothing would. Not unless she made things happen. It was like waking up, somehow, just walking down Fourteenth Street. Her street—two blocks from her home!

In one store there was an auction. A man with a persuasive voice was begging customers to bid on an elaborately boxed tea-set of red and white Japanese china. Annie ventured inside the door. Half a dozen youths smiled invitingly, even moved toward her. She waited for a minute, hurried out again. Idly enough, she ventured into a penny arcade two doors away. The place was full of a poorly dressed, shuffling crowd, leering men, bold-eyed women. A mechanical piano blared out a popular song. A wax figure, dirty, slightly melted, held a sign which told of a fortune to be had for a penny. There were peep-shows for pennies, too, showing partly nude women of generous proportions, music for pennies, with long and unbelievably unsanitary tubes to be fitted into your ears if you cared to receive music in this fashion. There were weighing machines and machines which told your strength

or gave you a penny's worth of electricity. A fellow in a sailor's uniform grinned at Annie and pointed toward one of the peep-shows.

"Seen this?" he asked. "It's hot stuff!"

Annie gave him what she hoped was a reproving stare, hurried down the street, turned up Fifth Avenue.



CHAPTER IV

YES, here she was—eighteen—and she had nothing. They were getting poorer and poorer all the time. Lester was always getting into trouble or out of work, grumbling when he had to help at home and threatening to go elsewhere to live. Ethel put her money on her back and wouldn't do a great deal to support the family. Her father's rheumatism, which usually disappeared in summer, seemed worse than ever, now. At least, he had more time at home for cursing and complaining about it. Even now, she knew he was sitting, a huge sponge which overflowed the red plush chair, cursing the weather and his rheumatism and his family. She couldn't exactly blame him. After all, he didn't get a great deal out of life.

Well, what did she get out of life? Working all day in the store wasn't fun, either. She wasn't the type who got ahead, got to be a buyer. She knew that. She might stay there forever, just behind a counter. Marriage? Whom could she get? Oh, any one of half a dozen fellows, if she tried hard enough. What would she have then? A home like she had now and babies—or no babies and a job, if she found a man who believed that a woman should keep on working after she was married. That wasn't much fun.

Men? They were easy enough—easy to get them interested, but they wouldn't do anything for you. There was old Blakeman. He had seemed interested. He had been awfully insulting, even offered her an apartment—he had pulled a lot of stuff about "making an old man happy." He hadn't helped her get ahead in the store. Of course not. Men don't help girls in that way. And women don't help other women, unless you happen to be the type—know how to get in with them and sympathize and kow-tow. Well, she wasn't the type. Men though—simple things—if there was some way—if she knew anything. Men—why of course—if she knew anything. The girl who got ahead was the girl who had a profession and knew men—how to manage things—there was Leah Fisher—a stenographer—she had married her boss, finally.

There were other ways of getting ahead, too, no doubt. A stenographer. Good money, right there. Of course. Why hadn't she thought of it? All of these years wasted—and she was eighteen.

When Annie told her parents that she was going to night school they did not protest as much as she had thought they would. Going to High School, day times, was one thing. Going to a free night school, after you had already earned money during the day, that was something else. Why any big, overgrown girl of eighteen would want to keep on going to school. . . . Still, if what Annie said was true—if she really could make more money that way—well, she ought to be able to know her own mind at eighteen—time most girls were marrying and settling down. . . .

Her parents encouraged Annie, as a matter of fact. If she married, they would be deprived of her earnings. If, on the other hand, night school would mean larger earnings. . . .

Learning stenography, when one has been out of school four years and only went through grade school, then, isn't an easy job. Especially, it isn't easy, if one has stood up all day selling things in a noisy store, where the air isn't any too good. Still, others did it. It took Annie a year to learn to be a stenographer. It was a year of long days in the store, long hours on her feet, her head aching, frequently, a hurried and not an especially good supper and then more hours in a bare school-room at an uncomfortable desk, an impatient teacher, impossible fellow students. That year remained a memory of never quite enough sleep or rest, trudging dully from one task to another, trying to learn word-signs between sales, during the day, and trying to keep awake sufficiently to recall those same word-signs at night. The year ended, finally. Annie was a stenographer!

Hunting for a position, then. It wasn't as easy as she had supposed. How many stenographers there were! Girls, just out of high school, not much younger than she was, but so much fresher and seemingly more eager and so full of the knowledge that high school must surely bring. There were college girls looking for jobs, even!

Annie gave up her job in the store—they wouldn't give her a trial as a stenographer there, though that didn't bother her a great deal. She had tried, at first, hunting a job in her lunch-hour. That didn't do. All good jobs were taken, by noon.

She would read the want-ads, the first thing in the morning, snatch a bite of breakfast, a roll spread with gelatinous factory-made preserves

and coffee, usually, and start out looking for a job. She wore neat, colorless clothes, rather faded into the background.

Her parents were rather difficult, those weeks. She had been the steady one of the family. Her father and Lester had always been more or less out of work. Ethel couldn't be depended upon. Annie's money had come in steadily, without a question. Now, it almost seemed to her as if they thought her the whole support of the family. They made fun of her ambitions to better herself, even while they urged that she find something to do. To hear her father, melting out over the red plush rocker, you would have thought that Annie had already entered into a life of vice and crime because, for a week or two, she didn't contribute to the family's upkeep.

"Shut up about me," she said, finally. "I don't know why I'm the family goat, but if I am, I am, and that's all there is to it. I'll get something."

She did. She got a stenographic position in a small hardware company. The proprietor insulted her, finally, so she quit. She could have "called him down," kept on with her job. What was the use? There were other jobs. There weren't any possibilities there, anyhow, excepting the small salary—a salary only a degree better than she had had as a clerk in the department store. That proprietor! What a stupid, lazy, dusty fellow! If she wanted to be insulted she'd never had chosen him to do it. Certainly not. Oh, well . . . might as well get experience. . . .

She was a better stenographer now. A few weeks more of idleness and Annie was with the Curter Rubber Company, in lower Broadway.

This was something like it—a clean office, with glass partitions, brisk girls, sleek young men, busy, pompous officials. For the first time in her life Annie felt that she fitted in. This was what she had wanted all of the time—in a way. At least she had always wanted cleanliness and order. You can't afford those when you are poor. She rather liked the work, even. She developed into rather a good stenographer, a bit uncertain, perhaps, as to punctuation, but always willing enough to consult the dictionary as to the spelling of a difficult word.

Annie began to wear the neat, unobtrusive business clothes that became almost a part of her personality later. Up to that time she had worn odds and ends of things that did not seem to belong together—a suit bought at a closing-out sale, a blouse her mother had picked up at a bargain. Annie insisted that she had to dress well now. As her salary was larger, her mother began to respect her almost enough to

allow her to buy clothes without reproach for the money she was "throwing away on style."

For some time, Annie was satisfied at the office. She always arrived on time. She did her work fairly well, almost eagerly. She spent the usual amount of time gossiping with other girls in the rest room, of course, but this was more from a desire to see how the other girls lived and to find out what they knew than from any time-wasting motive. She had always had a curiosity about people.

At home things were just as bad. Lester and her father worked spasmodically, with wonderfully good excuses for their idleness. Ethel still cared for cheap finery. Frank had a job as a messenger boy, but didn't make much money. Maud, the beauty of the family, wore yellow curls still, and, of course, had to have wearing apparel harmonious with her loveliness. Mrs. Robinson had dreams for Maud.

There ought to be some way to improve things. Certainly things couldn't go on that way always, that disordered apartment, never quite enough money for actual necessities, never any touch of pleasant living. Annie thought about this a lot. Her position was pleasant enough, in a way. It wasn't exciting, now that she was accustomed to the routine of the office. Certainly, in the normal course of events, no great change would take place. She might get a slight raise once or twice a year. She might keep her position for years and years. There were several stenographers at the Cutter Rubber Company who had been there for ten years! They received only a slightly larger salary than Annie, were laughed at a bit for their faithfulness—certainly nothing to look forward to.

Occasionally a girl in the office got married. Annie would meet the "lucky man," like as not. When he was a fellow employee, his salary was just about the size of Annie's own. She couldn't afford to marry a man like that. Once in a while one of the girls managed a vacation to one of the nearby summer resorts and returned engaged and with stories of great luxuries ahead. Annie found that these summer-vacation catches were invariably old and homely and not as rich as they were supposed to be. Anyhow, Annie couldn't have managed a summer-resort vacation if it would have resulted in an engagement to the Prince of Wales.

Yes, marriage was all right—if you could afford it—if you had only yourself to look out for or if you found a rich man. Certainly no rich

man was going to marry Annie. She knew that. Occasionally girls did find rich men—married their bosses, even. No such luck for her.

Then Margery Miller had an "affair." It was not the most savory sort of an affair, but Annie drank in the details eagerly. Old Man Bruntage—the last person in the world you'd suspect, unless you were familiar with business offices—took the dashing Miss Miller to Atlantic City for the week-end. Actually! Before going, he bought Miss Miller an entirely new outfit of clothes, which, rumor said, she needed badly, especially the silk underneath. Well, Bruntage and Miss Miller returned, after the week-end, but Bruntage's wife got wind of the affair—that does happen sometimes—and, though she wasn't the sort who wanted a divorce, preferring the money and position which went with being Bruntage's wife, she did insist on "something being done about it." Something was done about it. Miss Miller was fired.

The girls talked it over in the rest room.

"What a fool she was!" Lucile Stork volunteered. "She ought to have known it would get out. Those things always do, sooner or later. And when a girl's reputation is gone, there is just nothing she can do." Lucile was holding out for matrimony.

"There's another thing, too," this from Mabel Foster, "as soon as you give in to a man he doesn't care for you any more. He's interested only as long as you keep him guessing. All Margery has got is a few clothes. You bet, if I was going to do a thing like that—though of course I wouldn't think of such a thing . . ."

The girls were right. Annie felt that. And yet, if you didn't do anything at all—excepting your work, day after day . . .

Of course if you weren't a Margery Miller—if you kept your head—well, that might be a way, too.

Annie was given the position made vacant by Miss Miller's departure. Annie was Bruntage's private secretary!

CHAPTER V

ANNIE was a little mouse. Of course. She dropped her eyes when Bruntage spoke to her suddenly. She said "yes, sir," and "no, sir," with unnecessary frequency. She saw that her blouses were always fresh and dainty. She pouted her lips over her pencil when she was thinking. Bruntage told her that she was "very good, indeed. Quite satisfactory in the position." Was that all? What a plain thing Margery

Miller was, actually! Wasn't Annie even that nice looking? It worried her just a little—Bruntage was awfully respectful.

Perhaps men were simpler than she had imagined them to be. At least Bruntage was. Annie found that out. She began wearing rather thin stockings to the office. Bad taste? She had thought so, from things she had read in "advice to the working girl." After all, though, perhaps she and the woman who wrote the advice weren't quite in accord as to results, after all.

Annie's nice office oxfords gave way to thin slippers with buckles on them. She crossed her legs a bit. Simple? Of course. Weren't men simple? She continued wearing her plain little clothes. Occasionally her hand touched his as she was taking dictation. She would pull it away and say, "Oh, pardon me," rather dreadfully embarrassed. She kept one flower on her desk, in a glass of water.

There were a lot of questions Annie had to ask Bruntage. Men are so much wiser and more sensible than girls!

"Oh, thank you, sir—I knew you'd know. I'm sorry I had to take up your time. There was no one else around here who could have told me." And, "I don't mind working overtime, really. I know how particular you are about the reports, sir. I'd rather take a lot of time and feel that they were right."

One day she was crying. She brushed tears away, unobtrusively, as she typed a letter.

Oh, dear! Had Mr. Bruntage noticed? Annie was so sorry. It wasn't anything—anything he could do, really. Her—her father was ill—had been ill a long time and now there were doctors' bills. Quite a lot of them. Oh, yes, she helped pay the expenses—had the burden of things, rather . . . had worked since she was fourteen . . . went to night school to learn stenography. Oh, she had wanted to ask someone there—didn't know who to ask . . . of, if she could . . . if there was some way to—to get some money . . . yes, it was awful to be poor . . . not a great deal—nothing to Mr. Bruntage . . . two hundred dollars . . . she'd pay it off . . . pay it every week . . . a few dollars at a time.

It was lovely of Mr. Bruntage! She could pay him—not have it go through the office at all. Oh, he was lovely to her . . . she hadn't dreamed . . .

Bruntage gave Annie the money, a little roll of bills not very new ones. Annie started a bank account the next day, at noon. Not a great deal, of course. Still! She put three one-dollar bills on Mr. Bruntage's

desk every Friday, after the cashier came around with the pay-envelopes. She hadn't signed any paper, of course—this had been too personal for that—just between them. How good of Mr. Bruntage!

It was a few weeks later that Mr. Bruntage proposed a trip to Atlantic City. He'd be more discreet this time. Anyhow, what if he was found out—though he wouldn't be, of course. A nice, discreet little thing, Miss Robinson. Young, too, and innocent. There were preliminary things, of course. Then, plans.

Annie would need clothes, of course. She dropped her eyes. A tear shined in the corner of one of them.

"I've—I've never had any pretty things," she said.

That could be remedied easily enough—easily enough. After they got to Atlantic City . . .

Annie shook her head. She didn't like to say anything—she—she was ashamed of the things she had . . . wouldn't embarrass Mr. Bruntage by being seen with him. Still—she didn't know much about buying things. . . .

Mr. Bruntage was clever about buying things, it seemed. Three days later, on a Thursday, he met Annie, by appointment, in a little tea shop in East Fifty-seventh Street. He took her to some shops he knew about . . . yes, Annie had naturally good taste, it seemed—the saleswomen said so. She chose rather plain things—her style, really, but awfully expensive and well-made. Bruntage paid cash for the things. Annie had them sent to her home. Her mother wasn't clever about things like that—if clothes didn't have a lot of trimming her mother wouldn't think they were expensive.

Friday, modest and shy as ever Annie appeared at the Cutter Rubber Company. Sometimes, during the day, she caught Mr. Bruntage's eyes, dropped her own eyes, smiled. There was a delicious secret between them. They were to meet at two, on Saturday, at the Pennsylvania Station, to begin their holiday.

That evening, Annie ate the half-cold stew without protest. She didn't have anything to say when her father set forth his usual complaints—his rheumatism was worse, it seemed, and some freight that was being unloaded at the docks had gone wrong and of course he had been unjustly blamed for it.

After the evening meal, Annie wrote a letter. Letters were written seldom enough in the apartment-house in West Sixteenth Street. They were almost an event, in fact. Annie had brought home a new box of

writing paper, a new bottle of ink and an office pen for the occasion. Now, she cleared off the table herself, put an old *Saturday Evening Post* on it, in lieu of a desk blotter, and sat down to write.

"Writing a letter?" asked her mother, with a nice mixture of social interest and curiosity.

"Why, yes," said Annie simply, and didn't explain. She had learned that you don't have to explain, if you don't want to.

"You needn't be so grumpy about it," her mother answered, with quite unnecessary anger, considering her question and Annie's reply. "A lot of pleasure I get from my children . . . running around at all hours . . . doing all kinds of things under my very nose. . . . It seems to me that your mother . . ."

Annie was writing her letter. She wrote it in pencil, first, on a piece of Maud's tablet paper, crossing out one sentence, substituting another. Then she copied it carefully in ink on her new paper. It was plain white paper and the ink was black. When she had copied her letter she addressed an envelope, put the letter in and sealed it. She started to tear up the first penciled draft, thought better of it, tucked it into her purse instead. After all, she had tried hard on that letter. This is what Annie had written:

MY DEAR MR. BRUNTAGE:

I don't know how to tell you, after all of your kindness to me. I can't go—that's the easiest way of saying it. I just can't. I've thought it over and over. Maybe it's because of the home training I had when I was a little girl. I don't know. It just doesn't seem *RIGHT*, that's all. I never could come back to my parents and my little sister, if I did such a thing. I hope you will understand how I feel. I'm not coming back to the office, but I want you to know that I shall always remember your kindnesses to me—we have always been poor and never before have I ever had any pretty things—and your goodness to my father during his illness.

Sincerely,

ANNIE ROBINSON.

Annie put on her hat and coat and called to her mother.

"I'm going out to mail my letter, Ma, and I may take a bus ride before I come back."

It was customary, in the Robinson household, to make some explanation of one's departure.

At the corner, Annie dropped the letter into a letter-box. She smiled as she saw, in her mind, Bruntage's expression as he read it. He'd open it himself—she had marked it "Personal" and he always opened personal mail. That stupid little Martin girl would probably be in his office, in her place. What an old fool Bruntage was! Well, he'd never show that letter to his wife, at any rate.

CHAPTER VI

ANNIE climbed onto a bus at the corner and chose a seat on top. She had always liked bus-riding. Now, as she rode uptown, she thought over things much as she had done when she was a little girl. She was a little more definite about things now. She felt a certain exaltation, a slight wave of success, such as she had never felt before. After all—she had accomplished something. Old Bruntage! What a fool he was! Yet she knew from office gossip that he had taken at least four other girls on week-end trips, besides the stupid Miss Miller, who had preceded her as private secretary. None of the other girls had rebelled. Silly little flies—they had walked into his net, perhaps even grateful to get the few things he had given them, the couple of days at a good hotel. Horrid old man! Ugh! How mad he'd be at that letter! She'd chosen expensive clothes, too, and had paid back only a trifle of that two hundred dollars. Well, he had picked her out as a poor, simple little office worm. Let him be more careful next time—the old fool.

Not that he'd see through it. He'd probably just wish she hadn't been so virtuous. That was just as well. She hoped she'd never see him again. At that, the office would have to give her good recommendations. She'd telephone in the morning—say she was ill. Bruntage wouldn't dare say anything. Not he! The old fool.

There were days ahead . . . other things. For the first time life offered a pleasant pathway, with a narrow, glittering lane of possibilities. Of course, there were limits. Annie knew she wasn't the type her employer married. Anyhow, few enough employers really married their stenographers—outside of romantic short stories. Of course offices weren't devilish holes of iniquity. Certainly not. There were thousands of business men who never noticed a pretty face during business hours. Of course. Still, there were thousands more not above a stolen kiss, awfully susceptible to flattery, easy to prey upon, no doubt because they thought that they were the stronger power. Perhaps. She would see.

As the bus jostled her uptown, Annie looked into shop windows and then into homes and apartments much as she had done when she was a little girl. She still hated these people, their comfort and their smugness. Each of these families with some man at the head earning money. Imagine her father earning enough money for the family. Cleanliness . . . nice, smooth-flowing lives . . . pretty things. Oh, well.

She could get a good salary. She was a good stenographer now, had learned about offices. Lower New York, of course. Brokers, advertising men, officials, men like that. Big offices. That was where to go. Men who dealt in abstract things—stupid men who thought they were "deep" because they knew a few seemingly important facts. Those were the men who believed silly things, who looked for a sort of pseudo-romantic relation mixed in with their dry business facts. A conference in the morning, a long luncheon with a couple of men, peppered with seemingly important business details, letters dictated during the afternoon to a sympathetic little secretary. Of course.

If she had only herself! That would be easy enough. These girls who spoke so much about being self-supporting, when all they had to do was to support themselves! Of course—she could get away—it would be physically possible just to get out—out of the whole thing, out of helping to support the family and keeping an eye on Ethel and trying to put some sort of ideas into Maud's head. The family would get along somehow. Families always did, she supposed. However, the burden of support, started when Annie was fourteen, couldn't be thus easily swept aside. After all, she was, in a way, fond of her family, even—certainly she was fond of Frank and Maud! yes, even of Lester and Ethel and her mother and father. After all, none of them had any too much, either. Maybe they liked nice things, too.

Two hundred dollars! In the bank! To do with what she wanted to! Nice clothes, too, a good coat and dress and blouses and a couple of hats. She could give Ethel a hat and a blouse and still have nicer things than she had ever had before.

Two hundred dollars! The bus lumbered past apartment-houses, blank, factory-like, stolidly respectable, each with its little squares of light to indicate the families who lived, in cliff-dwelling fashion, each in its own little portion. How funny—all of these little families, each member of each family coming home each day, like little homing pigeons to a particular little nest in the cliff. Nice little nests! Why, if her family could live like this—clean and respectable—if Frank and

Maud could have a chance. Why not? There was even the university up here—classes at night—you don't even have to be graduated from a high school—Annie had heard that. If Maud could come up here to live and go to school—If Frank could "get" this neighborhood—Ethel and Lester, even. Why, the only reason Ethel and Lester liked cheap things, probably, was because they hadn't ever had any better to like, if they had wanted to. After all—Annie knew she had had to fight for everything she had—stenography even. Even now—oh, well, there wasn't any better way that she could think of.

Why not? The two hundred dollars would pay for moving and for . . . Moving—that old trash? The broken-down table, the hideous brass bed—the red-plush rocker her father melted into and went to sleep in every night after dinner—the cot in the living-room. It would be great—living up here—up-town—in a new apartment, clean and new—with a bedroom for the girls and another for Lester and Frank and one for her parents—and a living-room for—why, for company even . . . and a regular dining-room and a clean—may-be even a white kitchen. It could be done! Why not? The most that could happen was that they could be put out. Even that might be more fun than Sixteenth Street.

Annie knew that her father had always been against moving, had said that the Sixteenth Street apartment was near his work. Let him complain. Why, he was out of work most of the time, anyhow. Let him take a subway to work. And he would work! She'd see to that. She'd be boss now. Lester would work, too, or he couldn't come home. Absolutely. As for the others—well, her mother would agree, dough-like, with the strongest—and the kids would welcome anything, even if they couldn't see that it would help them.

Annie nodded abstractedly to her mother when she came in. Her father was asleep in the red rocker, a big, awkward figure, his weak mouth slightly open, a three-days' growth of hair on his face. Maud was the only young person at home. Maud was thirteen now, and finishing grade school, a round-faced girl, pretty in a dull, usual sort of way, but with good features. Her mother still considered Maud a beauty.

Annie called to Maud:

"Come out in the kitchen while I get a drink."

Wondering, Maud followed her elder sister. She rather obeyed Annie.

Drinking from the kitchen tin cup, Annie said:

"Now, don't yell about this—not one word to anyone else, understand. You're the only one I'm going to tell."

"All right," nodded Maud, importantly, eager for a confidence.

"If you lived in a swell—I mean, well, a grand apartment uptown, which had a bathroom and a big living-room where you could have company and near the park and all, would you keep on going to school—to high school, I mean?"

"Say, who's going to leave the family a fortune?" asked Maud.

"Nobody. You answer me. Give me your word of honor you'll keep on going to school—clear through high school—and—and college, maybe?"

"Sure," said Maud. She'd just as soon go to school. She never made very good grades, but, anyhow, it certainly was better than working. Then:

"But say, what's that got to do with us? Thinking of moving? A swell chance this family has got for anything. What's it all about, anyhow?"

"Nothing," said Annie, "only you go in there—and not a word out of you—understand. Only you got something to think about."

CHAPTER VII

ANNIE went to sleep that night with a wonderfully warm feeling of sacrifice. She was going to do a lot of things—for her little sister—for the rest of the family. Yet even, through all this she sensed something else. Of course it wasn't all for her little sister—not quite all—it was more than that—a desire for nice things, a few comforts—and under that—a desire to try her own skill—to sort of get into a battle.

She dreamed about apartments and new furniture—kept walking up steps that tumbled down as she walked on them and woke up with a horrible picture in her mind, of herself struggling with a man who had a knife in his hand. The picture would have frightened her even more if she hadn't remembered that she had seen that same picture in front of a show on Fourteenth Street just a day before. Oh, well, hadn't she heard some place that dreams go by contraries or that they show your disposition or something?

She didn't tell her family she had quit working. She left, dressed in her new coat and hat, at her usual hour, but took a bus uptown. Annie was apartment hunting!

At ten, as a slow-moving janitor was showing her through a far too elaborate eight-room apartment—might as well look at all kinds and get an idea of how other folks live—Annie glanced at her cheap wrist-watch and laughed. At ten was the time Bruntage got to the office and looked over his mail. What a fool the man was, anyhow!

Annie found a six-room apartment three days later. It was in One Hundred and Twelfth Street and was convenient to the One Hundred and Tenth Street Subway station, the buses, Central Park and Columbia University. To city dwellers with exacting tastes, the apartment might not have been exactly without faults. Annie dared not consider anything more expensive.

Anyhow, it was quite a step from West Sixteenth Street. The long, rather dark hall might not have been the last word in apartment buildings, but there was a nice, though not extremely large, front living-room, with three windows, three bedrooms, with a court window to each of them, a bathroom with quite modern appointments, a square dining-room with a dome, a plate rail and two court windows, and a nice kitchen, complete with gas stove, ice-box and built-in cupboards. Annie examined it carefully, spoke about decorations, gave her father's business address, explained that he was "in the shipping business" and made a deposit.

A few days later she called at the apartment again, made final arrangements for decorating—as much ivory paint as the owner would allow and tan wall-paper throughout the house—she hadn't read magazines all these years without profiting by them. The renting agent was glad enough to get the apartment rented, it seemed. He had not inquired too closely into the references. Annie paid a month's rent in advance.

Well, that was done! She'd get the money somehow. She'd always worked, when it came to that—always expected to . . . probably. Lots of men had made advances—men always did that—what had she ever got out of it? She'd see.

A few pleasant, exciting days, now, of applying for positions in the morning—or writing letters of application—and furniture hunting in the afternoon. Life was fun these days!

A job then—at a better salary than she had ever had. Nothing doing there. She found that out in a few days. Such respectable people. Still, she had to have something—expenses went on—the apartment was nearly ready.

During her lunch hour, one day, she made final arrangements about the furniture. She bought it at a large time-payment house. An instalment would be due the first of every month. If there were more than two lapses in payment—she believed it was two—the furniture would be taken away. Fair enough! She gave her father's business address—he was working, temporarily, again—Ethel's employer's name and her own. She made a first payment on the furniture. There would be just enough of the two hundred dollars left for moving the small amount of wearing apparel, the few things her mother probably wouldn't part with.

She liked the furniture she picked out. There was a davenport, covered in a cotton tapestry, though the design wasn't half bad. This opened out into, the salesman assured her, "a full-sized bed." This was for Maud. You couldn't put three people into one of those tiny bedrooms! There was a wing chair to match it, and another chair covered in blue velour. After all, her father had to have some chair in which he could sprawl—relax after his day's work or his day's idleness. There were several smaller chairs, a stylish "library table," a small, open book-shelf, though, so far, the family owned no books, a plain tan rug. For the bedrooms there were inexpensive "sets," nearly alike, in grey, white and ivory enamel. For the dining-room there was a plain round oak table, a buffet, ten chairs—three extra for possible company. The Robinsons had never had company at mealtime. The kitchen needed no furniture save a plain table and a couple of chairs. Well, that was done.

The furniture was delivered on Saturday. Saturday was a half-holiday for Annie. She went to the apartment on the Subway, sitting in a nervous tension the whole way. She reached the apartment before the furniture did. The floors had been varnished. The smell of paint was clean. The empty rooms were fresh with the cheap tan paper. Annie had a pleasant, electric feeling of adventure. What would the family say? How had she dared?

The men came with the furniture. There was much untying of string, setting of bedroom mirrors in the dressing-table frames. The furniture was in place! The papers were pushed onto the dumbwaiters. The apartment was finished!

To Annie it looked perfect. Cheap, perhaps. What of it? There was a floor lamp, with a yellow silk shade. There were bright rag rugs for each room. How well the tapestry pieces looked and the big blue chair!

Empty—well, perhaps. Still, when the family got in, put a scarf on the table, get a Victrola, maybe, later, and a few books and magazines. Gee, what would the family say?

Annie had arranged for gas and electricity and—yes—a telephone. She could hardly believe her own daring. She didn't know anyone to telephone to, excepting a few girls who had worked where she had. What of that? She'd meet people. It would be nice for Maud and Ethel, too. It's awfully hard for girls to get invitations to things if they haven't a telephone.

She closed the apartment, opened it again with her own key, to see if it were really there, took a bus home. A cheap apartment—what could it mean to all of these people in cars, who passed, smug in expensive clothes. What did they know—of—anything, those fat-faced women who never earned a cent in their lives, with their sleek husbands next to them.

She looked hate at them, as she had when she was a little girl. She'd—no—she couldn't show them—it wasn't that . . . exactly . . . she'd get things . . . her way—something, anyhow.

CHAPTER VIII

ANNIE was trembling when she got home. She took off her coat, hung it carefully on a hanger in the crowded closet—she and Ethel would have a closet all of their own now. . . .

She went into the kitchen, began, mechanically, to set the table.

"Time you're getting home," her mother growled at her. "Saturday afternoon, and you and Ethel walk the streets all day . . . a lot of help you are to me. . . ."

She didn't answer. She peeled potatoes.

All of the family were home except Lester. She waited until they had finished the thin fried steak and the watery potatoes. She started, mechanically, to eat the canned peaches. Then:

"We—we move tomorrow," she said.

"What do you mean . . . ? What are you talking about?"

Annie felt triumphant, a bit dizzy. She went on:

"I don't want one word out of anyone here. I'm tired of—this dirt and—and everything. Sixteenth Street—it isn't good for Maud—or Ethel, either. I've got a place all picked out—"

"You've got a place picked out," her mother said, "you—"

"Yes, I have," said Annie. "I got the furniture, too. Everything.

It's ready this minute. The family can come with me or not, as you want to. I'm going. Not one cent of mine goes into this house again. You keep that place up nice or I'm gone. I bring in the money and I'm boss. I spoke to Thompson—on the corner—he's coming for the things. You can get boxes from the grocer in the morning. Thompson will give you a price on things. I'm—I'm boss in this family."

There were squeaks, groans, curses. Annie felt as if she were living in a sort of dream. She loved it. It was the first big dramatic moment she had ever had. And to think—she had been able to create this—this scene—out of her own mind! Anything was possible!

Mrs. Robinson, Ethel and Maud were finally moved to inspect the apartment at once. Annie went with them. They got into their coats and made the trip on the Subway. Annie never found out what they thought of it—they were too incoherent for that. At least they were going to move!

At twelve that night, Hal Robinson was swearing and saying things about "an ungrateful daughter—after all the years I've spent working for this family. . . ." At one, the next day—there were so few things to move it might as well be done right away, if it was Sunday—Robinson was bawling out orders to Thompson and talking about "his new apartment" and what he was "getting ready to do, moving uptown." Annie was boss, though. The family recognized that. If her mother wailed a bit about "girls who don't confide in their mothers" and "girls who go wrong, these days," her wails were tempered a bit and became almost a gentle accompaniment to living. After all—it was rather nice, having a six-room apartment uptown . . . easier to keep clean, too, though Annie did seem to be getting an awful crank about wanting things too particular.

Annie left the new job after three months of it. Outside of borrowing one hundred dollars for an operation for her mother—she was to pay it back three dollars at a time until the sympathetic boss told her "not to mind" after the fifth pitiful payment—Annie's relations with the firm were quite businesslike. They were only too glad to give her excellent recommendations when she found a more remunerative position.

It was at Rutgers & Olds, Advertising, that Annie got it. It was a good position, secretary to Rutgers, the president, a bluff old man, though with rather a good reputation. He liked to drink a bit, but then, didn't most men of his age? He was nearly sixty, with heavy white hair and a white mustache of which he was perhaps unneces-

sarily proud. Mrs. Rutgers was an invalid who traveled rather constantly. Rutgers accompanied her frequently—that is, he was always able to get away for a six weeks' winter vacation at Palm Beach or Lake Placid, a two months' European trip in the summer. He seemed fairly content, so far as his friends could tell, with both his domestic and business arrangements.

The office force at Rutgers & Olds knew that Annie came in answer to an advertisement. She came in quiet, mouse-like, unobtrusive. A slender little thing, with mild grey eyes and a nice mouth, a pale little thing with a low, gentle voice. Certainly no one to make a fuss about. You could tell why the old man picked her out from among the dozens who applied for the position. She was just the sort of a private secretary a man would pick out if he wanted his work done well and quietly, without any nonsense.

It was at Rutgers & Olds that she got her nickname. It is quite probable that she knew of it right away. She learned soon enough, and, for some reason, didn't seem to resent it. It is certain that she never altered her manner nor her mode of dressing.

It was Quigley, one of the usual and always present smart alecks, who named her.

"What's the new stenog's name?" he asked, elegantly.

"Robinson—Annie Robinson, I believe," someone told him.

"I thought so—Annie . . . as I live, 'Little Orphant Annie' to the life. To think that Orphant Annie's come to our office to play! Ain't she grand?"

The office force all rather resented Quigley. We—for it was there that I first met Orphant Annie—took up for her. A nice little thing—did her work well—quiet and shy. Well, what of it—better than the usual office vamp who hung around trying to start something. Orphant Annie never tried anything with the office force, that hard-working, small-salaried contingent which did all of the work except the "conferences."

"Orphant Annie isn't an orphan at all," Miss Drucker, Old's secretary, reported, a few weeks later. "She's got a lot of parents—two of them—and she lives up near Columbia and studies nights"—we somehow felt that she did—"and her father's awfully ill and about to have an operation."

No one knew how Miss Drucker found out about the operation. It came to several hundred dollars, it seemed. Rutgers lent her the money.

It was the furniture, next, I believe. Everyone felt sorry about that.

It leaked out as such things usually do. Little Orphant Annie—who would have been better off, doubtless, if she had been an orphan, but who was supporting invalid parents, instead, was buying furniture on the instalment plan. She had paid the first instalment and perhaps even the second one. Then illness had come to the household—the illness that had necessitated the operation on her father. Now the furniture was threatened—every piece was to be taken away. Rutgers wasn't in town—Palm Beach, I believe. I think we were all ready to add our names to a subscription when someone—perhaps Olds—came to the rescue. Anyhow, the furniture was not removed. Orphant Annie, smaller and more mouse-like than ever, continued at the office. She had Rutgers' private room, all alone, now, and seated at his enormous desk, took care of all of his private correspondence while he was away.

A little thing, then—a rumor—scarcely that—concerning a certain Jacobson, one of the firm's clients—yes, the collar man—and our little Orphant Annie. Jacobson had a way of breezing in—which meant a "conference," when Rutgers or Olds was about. Now, he would go into Rutgers' office and have a chat with Orphant Annie—business, of course. If it had been anyone else except Orphant Annie, with her pale face and candid eyes, everyone in the office would have gossiped—that Miss Flint, now, who used too much rouge—or the young and quite too flip Bailey girl. Orphant Annie! We all felt that someone ought to warn Annie—Jacobson's reputation—all that. She seemed too young and untouched. No one had the indelicacy to say anything.

Someone saw them together at luncheon—it could have been a business luncheon, of course. Another time, one of the less important and perhaps quite jealous stenographers was sure she saw the two of them pass her, Saturday afternoon, in Jacobson's limousine. That was about all—excepting Jacobson's reputation and the fact that he was married.

The book-keeper, a quiet, rather lanky and certainly slow and stupid chap named Western, rather fell in love with Orphant Annie. We could see him, mooning around after her. We were a trifle surprised because she didn't encourage him more—after all, he was a nice boy—only a book-keeper and not apt to go higher, but young and pleasant . . . after all, Orphant Annie was only a stenographer, herself. He quite forced his attentions on her—little things—flowers and candy and a book, occasionally. Finally, he confessed to someone that Annie had allowed

him to give her a ring—not a large diamond, you know—they really weren't engaged—but, if she had the diamond he felt that she'd be prejudiced a bit in his favor. He'd been out to call, too, awfully nice, their apartment—he'd met the mother and a younger sister or two.

CHAPTER IX

WE all felt sorry when Orphant Annie left Rutgers & Olds. In a way, in spite of her quiet, mouse-like personality, she had added interest to the place. Rutgers had got back by that time and he and Olds were sorry, too. We heard that they even called off the small debts she owed them—she'd been paying a couple of dollars at a time. Western took it hardest of all. He knew a lot of inside stuff, it seemed, though gradually a little of it leaked out to the rest of us. Jacobson was at the bottom of it. If we had only warned her! We were all sorry enough. We hadn't wanted to worry her. So, Jacobson, dog that he was, had led her on, tempted her with a promise of—well, of the things a girl like Annie doesn't have. We remembered things she had said, little things, "I've never had anything pretty all of my life"—things like that. A sick father and a mother who wasn't strong! Worked since she was fourteen! Going to school at night! Little and quiet and grey-eyed! And Jacobson had tempted her!

She had nearly yielded to him, it seemed. Western didn't blame her for that any more than the rest of us did. Poor little Orphant Annie. Jacobson had given her presents—had planned a trip—the trip was to Paris—we heard even that—had bought her things preparatory to sailing—had helped her when her father needed a second operation. Then . . . well, she couldn't go on. . . .

We never knew how Western found out about it all—even about the note Annie had written.

"He won't forget that in a hurry," Western told us. "She was noble, that little girl. Only outside, in a most superficial way, was she tempted at all. You can see how that was. The things she said in her letter—how she couldn't go through with it. At the last minute she saw it wasn't right—told him so. She—she don't care for me—but she said she'd keep my ring—and if she ever did care . . ."

It is so easy to lose track of a mere office acquaintance in New York. I lost track of Orphant Annie for over a year, then. Then, it happened that a friend of mine, a Miss Dorset, was employed by the firm of Bingham & Sons, Brokers. Calling for her, one afternoon, I saw

Orphant Annie—nice little Annie—in a big office . . . clad in a neat little frock, her smooth hair as tidy and her eyes as candid as ever. Somehow, Annie and I got to talking, a talk that was continued over a dozen teacups and Annie told me, in a most fragmentary way, the things that I have put down here . . . other things, too. Rutgers, for instance—sly old Rutgers with the white hair and white whiskers—to think that he. . . .

Miss Dorset told me, at the time, that Annie was well liked at Bingham & Sons. No—she didn't know anything about her history—hadn't heard that she was called Orphant Annie, even. I didn't tell Miss Dorset more than that. To be truthful, she didn't ask me. She was all sympathy for Annie, all full of little tales about her. Annie's oldest brother—his name was Lester, it seemed—had got into trouble over money—hadn't quite understood about it—and was threatened with arrest—a jail sentence, even. Annie had come to Mr. Bingham, the youngest Mr. Bingham, about it, and of course he had loaned Annie the money—he had an awfully good heart. Annie had started to pay the money back, a little at a time, every week—it was just pitiful the way she tried—but Miss Dorset had heard that Bingham was just going to call the debt settled. After all, a poor little thing like Miss Robinson—did I know that her mother was an invalid?

I didn't keep up with Orphant Annie, I wish, now, that I had had more time for her. She was—and is—worth cultivating, I'm sure. A year after I talked with her at Bingham & Sons, her name came up, at a business luncheon one day. A man was telling a story.

"It served the fellow right," he was saying. "Men try to get away with too much in business. If the girl had been the usual office vamp, I'd have thought it was blackmail and might even have sympathized with the fellow, but in this case the conditions were exactly opposite. You could tell by the way the girl acted. At that, she escaped just in time—probably always will carry the memory of the thing—the nicest sort of a girl—modest—lives at home with her folks—her mother is ailing—some sort of an incurable disease. . . . Well, I'm glad she got some money out of the fellow—under the circumstances. . . ."

What was the girl's name? I wanted to know.

Ordinarily, he couldn't have told me, of course, but as long as she was so absolutely innocent, absolutely without blame—everyone who knew the details was in absolute sympathy with her—Robinson or Robertson the name was . . . girl's first name was Annie—oh, a nice, decent little thing. Did I know her?

The name sounded familiar. I admitted that. Yes—an ordinary enough name, to be sure.

The other bits that have come to me about Annie have fitted in, as such things always fit in, as we always meet just the one old friend we think we never will see again—just as we always come across old acquaintances and old names—forming more complete pictures than we had ever thought it possible to form, when we were young.

Recently, at a dinner, a woman said, "I want you to meet someone you used to know," and there was a stranger who turned out to be a former certain little Rose Smith, whom I'd gone to school with—second grade public school, St. Louis, when I was seven. Last week I had a picture post-card from India with the signature of an Irish lad I'd known fifteen years ago—he'd been a Russian dancer in vaudeville, then.

So there is nothing odd, then, in the fact that yesterday, I should have seen Orphant Annie. I shall see her again, I hope, through the years. Perhaps, too, when I do not see her I shall hear little things, like the things I have heard that complete, in a way, the picture of her that I carry with me . . . the story of Hanson, the builder, who fell in love with her and wanted to divorce his wife—the story of Dewitt, who fell at her feet and apologized—and was overheard—because he had misjudged her . . . Pinnet, who sent Annie's little sister through college.

A house in the country—Lester and Ethel married—Frank well established in business—little Maud grown up and graduated from college. I almost shed a tear over Orphant Annie a sentimental tear for her goodness and her gentleness—a shy little thing in quiet clothes, a dear little thing with big grey eyes and a pale eager little face. Then I thought of Hilden and the money he lent her for that always-necessary family operation, of Lewis and the letter his wife received by mistake.

But, after all, Orphant Annie doesn't need any sort of a tear, I'm sure. She did what she could, in her way.

"I wouldn't have made things the way they are," she told me, one day, "I just tried to get something out of the world, the best way I can."

I see her, jogging along up Fifth Avenue, on top of a bus, looking into windows to see how "nice folks" live, hating folks that had things without even wishing for them, wondering about things. How many of us . . . well . . . who are we to say? . . .

THE SENSIBLE CONVICT

by William Rose Benét

I heard a sensible convict
Who sat in stripes and smiled
And gave me his benediction
As round-faced as a child.
I don't know where the warden was
As I peered through the bars,
But I could swear the man did wear
A crown of cloudy stars.

So I said, "What are the dreams you get
In prison—in prison?"
He said, "I'll tell you of my dreams in hell—in hell,
And you wouldn't think I'd dream the like before the sun was risen,
But this is how I dream them in my prison-cell.

"Up a ladder of moonshine
Over the prison wall
I saw a harlequin clamber
And tip-toe stand up tall.
Chequered in red and blue and green
He twirled where the light was gold,
And a columbine, all snow and wine,
Was there for his arms to hold!

"And down through my square of window,
Floating across the floor,
Golden spangled dancers
Whirled to the iron door,
Little fairy ladies, quaintly curtseying,
And I on a throne all of my own,
An iron-bedstead king!

"Ain't it the limit what dreams we get
In prison—in prison?
Why, you can see I'm laughing yet, in hell—in hell!
But that's the way they come to me before the sun has risen;
So they say that I'm contented with my prison-cell!"

HOW THE LOST CAUSES WERE REMOVED FROM VALHALLA

by Lord Dunsany

IN the dark, at the dawn of time, before peoples began, the spirits of the nations rose up out of their lands and trooped away to Valhalla to be given each a Cause. And when each one had his Cause then all was ready, and tribes arose in the valleys and peoples began.

The spirits were given their causes by Those that were greater than they, each spirit choosing in turn from all the causes there were. It was thus, long since, in the dark, that the Nations came by their causes. And some of those spirits chose well and some chose ill, and others chose what causes were still to be had when the swifter spirits had chosen and flown away.

All but the spirits of Ireland went thence with a cause that day. In intense greenery of emerald moss and amongst scarlet mosses, in a low land circled by hills all misty morning and evening, with a moist wind blowing across that even then was mournful, dreaming of deeds of gods that were ancient even then, and brooding then as now upon things that cannot be, the Spirit of Ireland sat. And a rumour came to him there such as passes from spirit to spirit, and he knew that the spirits had chosen, and feared Valhalla was bare. And wailing he went in haste, and came the last to Valhalla. Nothing had they to give him, They that were greater than he, but the lost causes that the other spirits had left. In all Valhalla were lost causes only.

"Begob," said the Spirit of Ireland, and his wild eyes twinkled and shone, "by the Holy Mother of God they're after leaving the best."

And eagerly he gathered them all and tenderly carried them thence.

And so there were no lost causes left in Valhalla to trouble the pitiful Gods.

NOTES ON THE AMERICAN GENTLEWOMAN

by Thomas Beer

I

Her Humor

SOME years ago I sat between Mrs. J. Hemingway Jones and Mrs. Gerald Potterhanworth at a performance by the Ballet Russe in a large city. Gowns were low that season, and I had nervous, Victorian moments whenever either lady applauded some muscular exploit of Nijinsky, who appeared draped in a single strip of silk. His female associate wore a rather coarsely woven web of false pearls. Mrs. Jones and Mrs. Potterhanworth agreed that the local outcry against the ballet was mere prudery. The next morning Mrs. Jones and Mrs. Potterhanworth signed a petition praying that the boys of the city's High School shouldn't be allowed to swim in the High School tank unless dressed in full bathsuits. . . .

II

Her Artistic Convictions

I TOOK Miss Cobbleshope to tea in the Marengo because the ceiling of the tea room there pleases me. Miss Cobbleshope looked at it and then murmured, "How utterly vulgar!" We were joined, a moment later by a French bouncer looking for food. He rolled an eye at the ceiling and remarked, "Quel beau plafond!" . . . Last week my aunt Heraklia took Miss Cobbleshope to tea in the Marengo. Miss Cobbleshope observed, "I'm quite mad about this room. Isn't the ceiling exquisite?"

III

Her Democracy

MRS. JULLANDER OUTHWAITE'S father began life as a farmhand in hither Ohio and her mother was the daughter of an undertaker in lower Connecticut. I met Mrs. Outhwaite strolling down Park Avenue with her twin daughters, Sybilla and Leontine, aged ten. Mrs. Outhwaite smilingly told me: "The girls are so excited. Tomorrow's their

birthday and they're going to ride in a street car. They've never been in one and they're really quite thrilled. . . ."

IV

Her Aplomb

MRS. ADDISON SEYMOUR is noted for her urbanity. When presented to Pius X, she said, "Oh, how d'you do? I once met your father, Leo Thirteenth. . . ."

Her Patriotism

MRS. BALLANTYNE'S only son, Hubert, was killed in France. I took Walter Vane to call on the poor woman. Walter is a Captain of Marines. He left me in Mrs. Ballantyne's drawing room. She sighed, looking after him, and said: "What a stunning uniform that is, isn't it? . . . I do wish Hubert had been in the Marines!"

VI

Her Love of Music

I TOLD Mrs. Courtney Gelthorpe that I thought "Electra" an over-rated opera. She responded: "So do I. One does feel that Strauss is morally unsound, doesn't one? Fancy putting matricide to music! . . ."

VII

Her Social Insight

IT struck me as rather beastly that the poor East Side Jewess should be jailed for making a speech which wouldn't have bothered the police in London, Paris or Vienna. Evadne Hutchinson stopped painting her upper lip and objected: "But women of that class don't mind going to jail, do they? Aren't they used to that sort of thing?" . . .

HOW I DISCOVERED BERNARD SHAW

by Frank Harris

IT was in September, 1894, that I bought *The Saturday Review* and set myself to get the ablest men of the time to write for it, careless what their opinions might be.

Most newspaper men in London had heard of G. B. S.: his initials stuck in the mind because they were the same, or very like, those given to a famous pipe and advertised till they had become a household word. George Bernard Shaw profited by the coincidence. At this time he was writing on music for *The Star*, a cheap Radical evening paper, and spouting socialism wherever he could get a hearing; the last man to be connected with an English Conservative weekly.

I had listened to him once or twice and thought him an able iconoclast with no profound originality, but a saving grace of humor. From time to time, too, I had read his articles on music and while admiring the common sense of them and the satiric light he threw on pompous pretenses and unrealities, I noticed that he had begun to repeat himself, as if he had said all he had to say on music.

What should I ask him to write about? What was his true vein? He had as much humor as Wilde—the name at once crystallized my feeling—that was what Shaw should do, I said to myself, write on the theater, in essence his talent, like Wilde's, was theatrical, almost wholly in caricature, certain, therefore, to carry across the footlights and have an immediate effect.

I wrote to him at once, telling him my opinion of his true talent and asking him to write a weekly article for *The Saturday*.

He answered immediately; a letter somewhat after this fashion:

"How the Dickens you knew that my thoughts had been turning to the theater of late and that I'd willingly occupy myself with it exclusively for some time to come I can't imagine. But you've hit the clout as the Elizabethans used to say and if you can afford to pay me regularly, I'm your man for so long as the job suits me and I suit the job. What can you afford to give?"

My answer was equally prompt and to the point:

"I can afford to give you £6 or \$30 a week, twice our usual price. If that appeals to you, start in at once; bring me your first article by next Wednesday and we'll have a final pow-wow."

On the Wednesday Shaw turned up with the article and I had a good look at him and a good talk with him. Shaw at this time was about thirty-five; very tall, over six feet in height and thin to angularity; a long bony face, corresponding to a tendency to get to bed-rock everywhere; rufous fair hair and long unkempt reddish beard; grey blue English eyes with straight eyebrows tending a little upwards from the nose and lending Mephistophelian sarcasm to the alert keen expression. He was dressed carelessly in tweeds with a Jaeger flannel shirt and negligent tie; contempt of frills written all over him; his hands clean and well-kept, but not manicured. His complexion, singularly fair even for a man with reddish hair, seemed too bloodless to me, reminded me of his vegetarianism—the last man in the world to understand the physical side of the prize-fighter, though a pugilist had been the hero of his first novel. His entrance into the room, his abrupt movements—as jerky as the everchanging mind—his perfect unconstraint—all showed an able man, very conscious of his ability, very direct, very sincere, very imperious.

"To get to business," Shaw began, "I liked your letter, as I told you; the price, too, suits me for the moment; but—you won't alter my articles, will you?"

"Not a word," I said. "If I should want anything changed, which is most unlikely, I'd send you a proof and ask you to alter it; but that case is not going to occur often."

"But who else are you getting to write in this frank way?" he cried, "shan't we all be contradicting each other?"

"I don't love consistency," I replied, "I want half a dozen able men writing regularly so that I may hope for three articles a week with something original in each of them."

"Who are your six geniuses?" asked Shaw.

"Well, I've got H. G. Wells to do the novel-reviews. He's good enough, isn't he?"

"I daresay he is," was Shaw's non-committal reply. "He's an advanced thinker, too, you know, against the government, I mean. And who else?"

"D. S. McColl, the best art-critic in England," I said, "is coming to me. (He's now the head of the Tate Gallery) and Chalmers Mitchell, who will do the science (Mitchell is now the head of the Royal Zoological Society). I think you'll be in good company, for Cunningham Graham, Arthur Symonds, Pater, Wilde and a lot more have promised occasional papers."

"Rum crew for a Conservative ship; but that's your affair and not mine. You say I can be sure that the ghost will always walk, as theatrical people say."

"We'll pay regularly every month," I replied.

"Very well, then," Shaw concluded, "If the money appears regularly you can count on me for a weekly outpouring. You don't limit me in any way?"

"Not in any way," I answered.

"Well," he said. "It seems to me that *The Saturday Review* should make a stir."

"After we're all dead, not much before, but that doesn't matter," I replied. "I've asked all the reviewers only to review those books they admire and can praise: star-finders they should be, not fault-finders."

"What'll 'the master of flouts and jeers' think?" asked Shaw. (Lord Salisbury, the bitter-tongued Prime Minister, had been a constant contributor to *The Saturday Review* twenty years before, and was understood still to take an interest in his old journal.)

"I don't know and I don't care," I replied. And our talk came to an end.

I found Shaw an admirable contributor, always punctual unless there was some good reason to be late; always scrupulous, correcting his proofs heavily, with rare conscientiousness and always doing his very best.

Yet he was never physically strong: he told me one day that his work often exhausted him so that he was fain to go into a dark room and lie flat on his back on the bare floor, every muscle relaxed, for hours, just to rest. The confession surprised me: at that time I could hardly make myself feel tired in the longest day.

At rare intervals I had to tell Shaw his article was too long and beg him to shorten it. For months together I had nothing to do except congratulate myself on having got him as a contributor; though at first he was strenuously objected to by many of my readers who wrote begging me to cancel their subscriptions or at least to cease from befouling their houses with "Shaw's socialistic rant and theater twaddle."

Two or three incidents in the four years' companionship may be cited for they show, I think, the real Shaw. William Morris, the poet and decorator-craftsman, died suddenly. Shaw called just to tell me

he'd like to write an extra article on Morris, as a Socialist and prose-writer and speaker. I said I'd be delighted for Arthur Symonds was going to write on his poetry and Cunninghame Graham on his funeral. I hoped to have three good articles. I had two excellent ones: Symonds was very good indeed and so was Shaw; but Cunninghame Graham had written a little masterpiece, a gem of restrained yet passionate feeling: absolute realistic description lifted to poetry by profound emotion.

Shaw came blown in on the Monday full of unaffected admiration.

"What a story that was of Graham's!" he cried, "a great writer, isn't he?"

I nodded: "an amateur of genius: it's a pity he hasn't to earn his living by his pen."

"A good thing for us," cried Shaw, "he'd wipe the floor with us all if he often wrote like that."

I only quote the incident to show Shaw's unaffected sincerity and ingenuous admiration of good work in another man.

I came to regard him as a realist by nature, who living in the modern realistic current, was resolved to be taken simply for what he was and what he could do and equally resolved to judge all other men and women by the same relentless realistic standard. This love of truth for its own sake, truth beyond vanity or self-praise, is a product of the modern scientific spirit and appears to me to embody one of the loftiest ideals yet recorded.

Shaw was no knight-errant of unpopular causes or unpopular men. When Wilde had done three-quarters of his inhuman sentence, he was reported to be in bad health and I busied myself to get him released before his time. The head of the Prison Commission, Sir Evelyn Ruggles-Brise, told me that if a dozen literary men of distinction would sign a petition for Wilde's release on the ground that the sentence of two years' hard labor had been condemned by a Royal Commission as too severe, he had no doubt that the Home Secretary would advise the Queen to remit the rest of Wilde's sentence. I have told elsewhere how I tried to get Meredith to sign the petition and failed. After various other failures I asked Shaw: he thrust out his lips and wrinkled his brows in distaste, then said:

"Oh, I'm not important enough; get someone else."

I urged him a little disdainfully for I couldn't understand anyone refusing such a service when he burst out:

"I don't know that Wilde's worth incurring unpopularity for, if you

must have my true reason! He tickles the furry ears of the public; but he's not a Morris or a Graham; I'll have enough unpopularity on my own account some day; I don't care to weaken myself for Wilde."

Yet Shaw spoke stoutly for the fellaheen in Egypt in the Denshawji affair and he was a Pro-Boer during the South African mess and he has got into the hottest of hot water over this war—brave enough for anything in the way of duty: but not chivalric for a cent.

Another story:

One day I got a letter from a friend begging me not to let Shaw go on "writing drivel about Shakespeare; on his own job he's good but why let him talk rot?" I had noticed Shaw's divagations; but he usually employed Shakespeare like the British employ the ten commandments as a shillelagh, and as Shaw took the great dramatist generally to point unconventional morals, I didn't wish to restrain him. But one day his weekly paper was chiefly about Shakespeare, and he fell into two or three of the gross common blunders on the subject: notably in one passage he assumed that Shakespeare had been a good husband—the usual English misconception.

I wrote him at once:

"You are writing so brilliantly on the weekly theater-happenings, why on earth drag in Shakespeare always like King Charles's head, as you know nothing about him." I got an answer by return:

"What in thunder do you mean by saying I know nothing of Shakespeare? I know more about the immortal Will than any living man," and so forth and so on.

I replied instantly:

"Come to lunch one day at the Café Royal and I'll give you the weeds and the cup of water your soul desires and prove into the bargain that you know nothing whatever about Shakespeare."

When we had ordered our lunch Shaw began:

"Who's going to be the judge between us, Frank Harris, on this Shakespeare matter?"

"You, Shaw, only you," I replied, "I am to convince you of your complete and incredible ignorance."

He snorted: "Then you have your work cut out; we can't sleep here, can we?"

"The time it will take," I retorted, "depends on your intelligence—that's what I'm reckoning on."

"Humph?" he grunted. We had our meal and then went at it hammer and tongs.

"You believe," I began, "that because Shakespeare left Stratford after being married a couple of years and did not return for eleven years that he loved his wife?"

"No, no," replied Shaw, "I said in my article that in his will he left his wife 'the second-best bed' as a pledge of his affection. I remember reading once something that convinced me of this; I don't recall the argument now; but at the time it convinced me and I can look it up for you if you like."

"You needn't," I replied, "I'll give it you; it's probably the old Professorial explanation: the best bed in those days was in the guest room; therefore the second-best bed was the one Shakespeare slept in with his wife."

"That's it," cried Shaw, "that's it and it is convincing. How do you meet it?"

"Aren't you ashamed of yourself?" I replied. "Here's Shakespeare, the most articulate creature that ever lived, the greatest lord of language in recorded time, unable in his will to express a passionate emotion so as to be understood. Why, had he even written 'our bed, dear' as the common grocer would have done, we'd all have known what he meant. Shakespeare could never write 'the second-best bed' without realizing the sneer in the words and intending us to realize it as well. . . ."

"Good God," exclaimed Shaw, throwing up his hand to his forehead impatiently, "of course not; how stupid of me! Confound the Professors and their idiot explanations!"—and after a pause—"I'll give you the second-best bed"; I'm prepared to believe that Shakespeare did not love his wife. Go ahead with your other proofs of my ignorance."

At five that afternoon we left the table, Shaw declaring he would never write again about Shakespeare, if I'd write about him.

On that, I began my articles on Shakespeare which afterwards grew into books; but Shaw has not kept his vow. He has written again and again on the subject and always ignorantly being more minded to realize Shaw than Shakespeare. In his latest book indeed "Misalliance," he devotes thirty pages of preface to his playlet "The Dark Lady of the Sonnets" in order to convict me of mistakes and at length

he had learned a new trick. He takes thing after thing I've discovered; sets them forth in my very words and then declares: "Frank won't have this or that," thus hoisting Frank with his own bomb.

Towards the end of my tenure of *The Saturday Review*, Shaw was making a great deal of money by his plays, thanks mainly I believe to the way Arnold Daly had fought for him in the United States.

Casually he told me one day that every article he wrote for me cost him much more than he got for it.

"I mean," he said, "the same time spent on a comedy would pay me ten times as much."

Thus was Bernard Shaw discovered. And thus did he discover himself!

OPHELIA

*by Elinor Wylie**

My locks are shorn for sorrow
Of love which may not be;
Tomorrow and tomorrow
Are plotting cruelty.

The winter wind tangles
These ringlets half-grown,
The sun sprays with spangles
And rays like his own.

Oh, quieter and colder
Is the stream; he will wait
When my curls touch my shoulder
He will comb them straight.

* This fine example of Mrs. Wylie's genius was unaccountably omitted from the collected edition of her poems. Probably was overlooked.

THE END OF ILSA MENTEITH

by *Lilith Benda**

ON the outskirts of large cities almost invariably they are found—the long rows of commonplace little dwellings, generally two stories high, and with two flats to a story, all exactly alike, all erected under the astute eye of the real-estate magnate, who, catering to the middle classes, with the bait of middle-class appurtenances of luxury, draws his patronage from those who are called the brawn and sinew of great nations. They are highly genteel abodes, these rows of little houses resting just between the city boundaries and the suburbs. Clerks and tradesmen inhabit them with their families—people honest and unimpeachable, people of innumerable progeny, people who go to church, who celebrate on New Year's Eve, who dine in restaurants regularly each Saturday night, write letters upon public affairs to the newspapers, say "How well you're looking," over the telephone; women of cotton stockings and double chins, men of stern standards and dirty fingernails—thrifty, hum-drum, well-balanced folk.

In just such an orderly little abode, located on the outskirts of New York, one night at precisely ten minutes after ten, a revolver shot rang out. A woman had committed suicide. . . .

There followed a sudden flurry. The lady in question had been a divorcée of somewhat questionable repute, who, sprung of humble origin, had within ten years acquired four successive husbands, all of them wealthy, and all, it was rumored, made to turn over to her very substantial settlements in place of alimony, when the four successive divorce cases came up. The newspapers made of her demise a nine-day sensation. The women in the neighborhood whispered; the men winked. The real-estate agents were worried, but strove successfully to hush the scandal. Within a short time tongues ceased wagging, and Ilsa Menteith, who invaded the domain of salubrious respectability to make her effective getaway, was speedily forgotten.

I

The flat on the lower right of the house was occupied by a family of unlimited offspring and exemplary conduct, named McCabe.

* Lilith Benda is the penname of Lucia Bronder. George Jean Nathan considers this one of the best stories ever printed in *The Smart Set*. Her work has never hitherto appeared in book form although she is the author of many excellent short stories.

A young doctor, blond and pink-checked, rang the McCabe bell on the day after the suicide and smiled with more than a touch of deference in his eyes upon the neat, gray-haired woman in curl-papers and gingham house-dress who opened the door. She was decidedly unattractive, the traces of erstwhile prettiness on her face only enhancing an effect as of damp, unpleasant decay, like that which emanates from flowers left in water to die—an effect which not even the spick-and-spanness of her attire, not even the cleanliness of her well-kept rooms, could quite efface. Nevertheless, the doctor contemplated her with genuine respect as together they entered the room where the patient lay.

It was the fledgling physician's first big case. One of Mrs. McCabe's children had undergone a dangerous operation, and during the long weeks when things hung in the balance, and the most painstaking nursing was required to meet the complications that arose, the doctor had found, in this frail, aging woman a devotion so devoid of hysteria, a patience so unswerving, a judiciousness and self-control so adequate to the exigencies, as to astound him.

This morning, however, he was disquieted by a slight tension in her manner, a flush, as of delight, on her face. At the convalescent's bedside she was simply the efficient nurse he had come to know, but once in the hallway, as she touched his arm and led him into her bedroom, he quivered and blushed. The young doctor was keenly susceptible to external impressions, and acutely affected by them. He had been in practice only a year, but had learnt already to recognize the signs of approaching confidence from middle-aged women, to gauge at its value the look of anticipatory gusto on their faces, and he was as yet unable sympathetically to comment upon the gynecological details so rapturously disclosed without the color rising on his fair, young face.

Unquiet, he awaited a tale of symptoms and sufferings. But she surprised him by pointing upward:

"You've heard about that woman, doctor? That Ilsa Menteith?"

He nodded. And seating herself in a straight-backed chair, eyes glistening with the gluttony of gossip, she took a breath deep enough to last through a long discourse, and launched into a torrent of words:

"Fine goings-on for a respectable neighborhood! To think of a woman like that right here in a house where there's nobody that's not decent! Right here among our sons and husbands! A woman of ill fame, for that's what she was, and the worst kind of a one, inveiglin'

men into marriage to get their money, and then divorcin' them one after the other. None of us here suspected who she was. You couldn't have told it to look at her—she wasn't even pretty, and dressed quiet, too. Always with her red head in the air, and smiling like she was some queen! I knew why she done it—it was remorse, that's all. She saw decent people and little children around here, and it made her repent and make off with herself. Divine justice, that's what it was! She got her desserts all right, but"—a look of foiled vengeance shot from the faded eyes—"she didn't get enough of 'em! She got off too easy, the jade. Her kind makes my blood boil—the kind that covers up their sinful doings by marriage, and thinks they're so much grander than honest, decent folks. An out-and-out fast woman we can find out, and show up, and make 'em suffer and reform, and turn respectable. . . . But to think that one got off so easy. It—it isn't fair."

Mrs. McCabe broke off abruptly, and looked up into the doctor's vague, troubled face. Something there arrested her. She appeared for a moment to ponder, and presently he saw the wrath of thwarted vengeance fade from her face, to be replaced by the composed look he had met always at his patient's bedside.

"Maybe you don't understand, doctor," she went on slowly, and in softer tones, "I guess only a woman, and a respectable woman, can understand. We respectable women can't tolerate jades like that, with their heads in the air, and their smiles. Our heads ain't in the air, we don't smile any too much. . . . I've had nine children, and it's a lot of trouble and pain and time, havin' children—she had none, and she never kept house, or worked, or done any of the things a wife ought to do to earn her keep. And I've cooked for my family all these years; I've scrubbed and done the washing when we couldn't afford a wash woman, and I seen that my children went to church and dancing school. Gave 'em a good education, too, and kept cultured myself. I belong right now to a literary club connected with the Sunday school. Culture—that's the most important thing of all! Well, I been a good wife and mother, and there's many another like me, and it's not fair for women like her upstairs to have had all she's had, and then slip off so easy with 'er head in the air! I was good-looking myself once, but work kills all that, although—well, Mr. McCabe still says" . . . She simpered a little, and stopped.

The doctor had learnt how to hide a look of amusement under an interested smile. Noting it, immediately she became eased and expatia-

tory, ready to reveal secrets not at all germane to medicine, the secrets bosom friends and husbands never hear, which women pour into their physician's ears.

"I saw him, doctor, through the keyhole—that night," she whispered dramatically, "I made it my business to see him, for I was just beginning to suspect her with her fine airs! I made it a point to know who comes to see all the tenants. He was the first visitor she had here. Doctor, I'm sure of it"—she rose, approached him, and breathed her conviction into his ear—"that night she brought sin right into this respectable house! And after she done it, she was sorry. She killed herself in remorse. I know it, because I saw him—a wicked looking man, he was. The kind you don't want your daughters to go out with. The kind that waylays young girls. I just got a peek at him, but his sin was in his eyes. And he looked ready for more prey. I—I was scared, even behind the locked door."

She faced him, indignant virtue battling with pleasurable excitement in her eyes. The doctor endeavored to smile even more sympathetically, and at the same time to back out of the room. But his smile was his destruction. It invited to confidence, and the woman's eyes lit.

"Sin and love's not the same thing. Now in my case, doctor"—In dread expectancy he shuffled his feet—

—And broke out into a sweat of agony, as, after a tremendous anticipatory inhalation, she launched forth without niggardliness into gynecological mysteries, occult obstetrics, esoterics of the connubial state, expounded in such detail and so dramatically evoked as to smite the man of medicine as with a sense of vicarious guilt. . . .

Even after a year of practice he remained a romantic, and in anguish, his eyes roved, as with alert ears he awaited the first indication of waning breath control. When for only an instant she paused, he broke out into a feeble shout:

"Yes, yes, Mrs. McCabe. Maternity's a beautiful thing!" Discreetly, determinedly, he edged door-wise.

"I'm glad you're one man thinks so. Most of 'em's got hankering for Jezebels like her upstairs. Children and culture—they're the most important things. Now just before I had my eldest"—

"Maternity—a beautiful" . . . In exultant despair his voice drowned hers, and, backing through the doorway, with a vague, uneasy wave of his arm, he pointed by chance to a print of the Sistine Madonna hanging over the bed.

"Isn't it, doctor?" Her voice softened; the glutton look went out of her eyes; with something of awe in her face she contemplated the picture. "Nice painting, isn't it? I'm very fond of high art, and make it a point to study it, and always keep cultivated. That's the Raphael Madonna, you know."

II

While they were bearing the remains of the *felo-de-se* from the house, two young women, one with a fat, healthy baby gurgling in her arms, stood at a window of the flat at the upper right, and watched the grim procession. Both appeared under twenty; both were wide-eyed, pink-cheeked, and innocent looking. The little room they stood in was tastefully furnished in an inexpensive, instalment-plan fashion. A fresh wholesomeness entirely devoid of viscosity pervaded the place, a wholesomeness suggestive of young life, young love, young ignorance untrammelled by the onerousness of ideas.

"Oh, dear," the little mother chirruped, as she shifted her baby from one arm to the other. "Oh, dear, but it's funny watching 'em carry her out that way, for all the world like they used to carry you, Irene, after a shindy, at five in the morning, when you couldn't navigate any more."

The other tossed her pretty head: "Well, anyhow, if I can't stand my grog, at least I always keep my sense. Now you, Lily, if you hadn't had me to take care of you, many's the time you'd have given your last cent, and the last ring off your fingers, to any cabaret singer or professional dancer you happened to be sticky about. Remember the time"—

"Never mind that," the first interrupted, tossing the infant high into the air to hear its laughter, "I believe he's cutting another tooth, Irene. Look here."

But the other, her eyes a little wistful, shook her head.

"You've been married over a year now, Lily. Tell me, don't you ever want to get back at the game?"

"I should say not."

"Then why do you always want me to come to see you, and tell you what the crowd's doing, when you know your husband don't like to have me here?"

"I don't know," the first laughed, rattling a toy to amuse the child. "It's just kind of like reading a story, or seeing an exciting play, now—to have you tell me what they're all doing. But I'm as happy as I can

be. I'm tickled to death with marriage, and my husband, and my baby. And do you know what, Irene? I'm particularly tickled to death right this minute, now I've seen 'em carry the Menteith woman out that way."

"Why?" While she reached for her hat, the other meditatively rouged her lips at the mantel mirror.

"Oh, because"—the little mother's mouth hardened—"it's not the wives and the families, it's her kind that makes life hard for the rest of us. Holding her head up, and thinking herself so awful respectable and above everybody! Walking like some empress, when she was no better than any of us. Grabbing the kale, and the husbands, and off on yachts when we were washing our own stockings in hall bedrooms! I didn't know who she was, but I saw her pass two or three times. . . . She thought she was so almighty grand and clever. It makes me sick to think of it! Well, she got hers at the end like any other Jane. And it tickles me to death to think that here I am with a husband, and a baby, and a nice home, and nobody suspecting anything,—and I'll see that they never suspect,—while she with her haughty ways cashed in at the finish like any other third-class rounder. . . . And all because of a John who threw her down!"

"What do you mean, threw her down?" Interested, the other turned from the mirror.

"I'll tell you. . . . The night it happened, Freddie called me up at ten o'clock. He was delayed late at work. I had to go downstairs to the 'phone. That's the only thing I don't like about this house, there's no private 'phones. I had on my pink kimono, and if I do say it, I look good in kimonos. Well, I saw the man. He was just coming out,—the only man she ever had to see her here. Take it from me, he was there some. You know the kind,—the kind you'd sneak away from a wine racket to drink nickel beers at Danny Clancy's with. And the way he looked at me—sort of bored but interested! Say, I tell you I know he'd just given her a good, proper squelch of a throw-down. And it makes me feel fine, Irene. It makes up for the hall bedrooms. She thought she was such a wonder, but the night she quit I got a ve-ry much taken look from the John who threw her down. . . . Say, Irene, you'd better hurry. Freddie'll be home soon, and you know he don't like me to have you here."

"I'm going." With a sigh the other took up her handbag. "But, you know, I think you're hard on that Menteith woman just because you're happy, Lily. I feel sorry for the poor thing. It's awful the way

all the nice chaps throw a girl down. I guess she was tired of those rich husbands, and wanted to marry somebody she liked. I guess she asked him, and they always balk at that, the nice ones,—not meaning anything against your Freddie, only. . . . Remember Gus? I've been running around with him off and on for three years. He had a birthday last month, and I spent twelve of my last eighteen-fifty for a present. Pajamas it was,—all pink silk stripes. I guess he thought I had intentions. I guess he thought I was hinting at the honeymoon, and the old fourteen karat band,—and I guess I was, at that. Haven't seen him since. . . . I'd like to marry someone I liked, and settle down. I suppose that poor dead thing did, too."

She sighed again, and kissed the baby. "Well, good-bye, Lily, call me up some time."

III

In the flat on the lower left dwelt one Matthew Sylvester Jennings, a mild little man of excessive corpulence, a resigned, henpecked little old man, too ositant ever to protest against anything. A shop in which he dealt in tame household pets, a wife y-clept Lucretia with a cast in her eye, and no waistline, a black Siamese cat he called Aspasia, and a shelf of books, four of which, "Hamlet," a General Anthropology, a Complete Zoology, and a collection of William Blake's illustrations to the book of Job, lay always at his side when, night after night, he sat in ponderous immobility, smoking his pipe,—these Matthew Sylvester Jennings possessed. All other worldly goods the invitiante Lucretia had appropriated,—bank account, insurance policy, the very state of his soul.

Upon the heavy layers of fat which, save where the lines of a good chin defiantly proclaimed themselves, and where, among rolls of adipose tissue, two vivid blue eyes peered through slits, seemed to enwrap his whole personality as in the folds of a Persian yashmak, Lucretia looked approvingly. But with grimness she would contemplate both the cat Aspasia, an animal abominated, but tolerated withal, and a massive patriarch, her husband's boon companion, a creature likewise tolerated with abomination. For, with a sort of inanimate, milk-and-water stubbornness, Matthew Sylvester Jennings clung to his cat, and his friend. All the disapprobation of Lucretia could not remove Aspasia from his knee; all her acid expostulations availed not a whit when it came to the subject of the patriarch's biweekly visits.

On the evenings when he was expected, always at the stroke of eight,

an additional tinge of sourness overspread her crabbed features. But invariably she fetched a jug of claret, the only beverage she permitted, and a tobacco jar, set them on the table with a ferocious bang, and, as at precisely five minutes after eight the door-bell rang, retired into the kitchen for an hour, when, with her reappearance, the two old men stirred, rose heavily, and shook hands in silence.

Massive and tall, the great, white beard which fell to his waist gave the patriarch an effect of infinite magnanimity. He sat always in the same attitude, chin sunken, eyes raised, one elbow on the arm of his chair, with the hand extended and unconsciously assuming the position of blessing used by priests of the Latin church. As he sipped his claret, he seemed to invest it with the augustness of consecrated wine. As he puffed at his pipe, Matthew Sylvester Jennings was reminded of the illustrations to the Book of Job,—Blake's pictures of a dispassionate deity blowing hurricanes over a sin-ridden world. He suggested omnipotence, omniscience. He looked at once benignant and all-terrible. . . . And when he spoke it was in the squeaking falsetto of senile disintegration.

Three days after the suicide the old men met. For some time they sat smoking in the silence wontedly maintained. Both were men of few words. The patriarch, moreover, was afflicted with extreme deafness, which precluded facile confabulation, since it was only with difficulty that his host could force a voice much above a wheezy whisper, while audibility to the sharp ears in the kitchen neither desired. Nor was it often that their eyes met. Matthew Sylvester Jennings' were habitually lowered meditatively, his friend's lifted as in rapt contemplation. Ordinarily they spent their hour of communion, sipping their wine, smoking their pipes, with scarce a word exchanged.

This evening, however, there was a tension in the air. The nature of the suicide, the prominence the newspapers had given it, caused even these two to feel a stir. Presently they looked at one another. It was in the flat above that Ilsa Menteith had died. Significantly the patriarch rolled his dark eyes to the ceiling, and, in a sort of vehement squeak:

"Why?" he queried.

Matthew Sylvester Jennings at first made no reply. His eyes fell slowly, and as if with great difficulty, he laid his pipe on the table, and folded his hands. Each one of his gestures, every movement, the very play of his lips when speaking, seemed to accomplish themselves only after infinite care and deliberation. It was as if his unwieldy

ponderosity were an alien substance folded about him, a something as incongruous to his real personality as to his vivid blue eyes and good chin,—a something obtrusive and distressing which impeded his movements, checked smooth utterance, interfered with the workings of his brain.

Very slowly now the puffy lips parted. Very slowly he leaned toward his friend. And then suddenly, with astonishing rapidity, one word piled pell-mell upon the other.

"She had big green eyes," he panted, in a sibilant monotone, "and red hair. She was beautiful. She had a sunny smile,—this Ilsa Menteith. The very day she did it—in the vestibule—I saw her. She was beautiful. . . . She should be denied decent burial,—she should be drawn, and quartered, and fed to wild beasts. She did a terribly immoral thing. She committed the one unpardonable sin. Anybody is an unspeakable criminal who deprives the world of a lovely woman in her prime,—so long as ugly-tempered women with casts in their eyes exist."

Confused and fatigued at the unprecedentedly long speech, he passed a hand across his forehead, and sank back into his customary lethargy, the mobile eyes alone betraying an inner unrest. His friend still stared ecstatically into the ceiling. The cat Aspasia leaped upon his knee. And, passing a cumbersome hand over her sleek coat, very gradually his lips parted again.

"I am a man of imagination,"—scarcely above a whisper he spoke now, with a certain weighty deliberation, and tardiness, as if his utterance were behindhand, were but an echo of a mind working always far in advance of his words,—*"Imagination is a bane; it galls and wounds when one is fat and lazy and easily imposed upon. Activity? Impossible. Achievement? Absurd. Love? Ridiculous. Speech? Difficult,—only this strange event upstairs spurs me to it to-night. . . . But nevertheless I am a man of imagination. I have my God, my books, and my animals, and love them as my William Blake loved his God, his books, and his animals. And then, too, I have my women. . . ."*

Guardedly he glanced, first at the patriarch whose fixed gaze never altered, then toward the kitchen, and presently, laying his hand affectionately on the General Anthropology, droned on:

"I have my women,—here . . . here,"—he tapped the volume significantly,—*"most men have their mistresses in the flesh and turn to the poets to have them in the spirit, too. I have them in the spirit, and turn to my Anthropology to have them in the flesh."*

"This Ilsa Menteith was beautiful," he went on, his voice sinking

even lower, "civilization coarsens women. Only among a few savage races do you find the refined, feline types. There are pictures of them,—in here. . . . What's uglier than a civilized woman's leg? Great, clumsy, conical thing, humpy at the top, ending in knock-knees. The masculine thigh is columnar, and so, for instance, the Japanese girl's; narrow hips, too,—fine shoulders, long legs, long arms, long hands, long feet, long, slim fingers . . . liteness . . . slenderness,—fine points, fine points! These doughy, civilized women,—faugh! But Ilsa Menteith was beautiful,—she was like a savage, like a cat. . . .

"Woman is very seldom feline," he went on after a pause. "Why do people continually cast aspersions upon the loveliest animals in existence by comparing them to women? A well-rounded woman continually writhing and twisting, half-closing her eyes, and trying to look inscrutable,—is she like a cat? Some tabby with many a litter to her credit, perhaps . . . but bovine, rather—bovine,—a cow with the blind staggers! The fine specimen of feline, like my *Aspasia* here, is a gourmet, an aesthete, a masculine beast, the most masculine of animals. The fine specimens suggest long, lean men, decadent aristocrats, high-bred indolents, subtle, bored, indifferent, dispassionate souls. . . . But this Ilsa Menteith, I saw her only once or twice, but she was beautiful like a cat. . . . Why did she do it, you ask?"

The patriarch continued to stare up into the overhead unattainable. And now the voice of Matthew Sylvester Jennings grew even fainter, fell into a stifled whisper, seemed to come from an immense distance, as if the essence of his personality were struggling once to express itself against awful, and hitherto victorious odds.

"Why did she do it? I am a man of imagination,—I know, I know. I saw the man, you know, as he went out at the door a few minutes before it happened. I saw a great sadness,—and weariness, and aloofness. He was hurrying, and absent-minded. He almost knocked me down. He had a sensitive mouth and fine eyes,—small, grey, keen. It was the face of an extraordinary man. And it was the face of a man who loves, because it was the face of a man brooding upon things bigger than love, a book he was writing, perhaps, or some great enterprise,—or, who knows, perhaps even an animal story. It was the face of a man who had been profoundly moved, and I know he had been moved by her,—not to pity, not to desire, but to things bigger than she, bigger than love itself."

Faintly in his chair, Matthew Sylvester Jennings stirred. Very slowly

his eyes opened so that the big, blue irises completely revealed themselves, giving, as it seemed, a passing glimpse of the real man. His voice sank now to a well-nigh inaudible whisper, but with a suggestion of energy and power behind it.

"I who have never seen it know the face of the man who loves. Through my animals I know it. What are the animal sounds dear to lovers? The buzzing of bees in midsummer, the crooning of frogs, the cooing of doves. And why?—Because to them all there is an unchanging, never-ceasing note, a something lulling, soothing, indefinite, unending,—a something with an eternal quality. And that's what love means to an extraordinary man. Something eternal in its very evanescence, something gentle and not disturbing to bigger things. He loved her, and that's why she did it!

"Do you see, do you understand, my friend? He loved her, and with his love, this woman of husbands and sordid affairs attained her apex. She reached the empyreal zenith, and so,—"

"Why?"

In his quavering treble, the patriarch, seated massive and still, as if planning the destinies of countless generations, broke in.

"A sad case, that, upstairs," he continued. "What do you make of it, Matthew?"

The venerable man finally lowered his eyes from the ceiling, blinked stupidly, looked blank, and put his hand to his ear the more readily to catch a reply. . . . Throughout his discourse, Matthew Sylvester Jennings had failed sufficiently to reckon with his friend's excessive deafness.

His pudgy face reddened slowly as he realized he had been addressing unhearing ears. In complete exhaustion he fell back into his chair. Now his voice was inaudible. His lips scarce moved.

"My Blake's Deity in the flesh afflicted with deafness! My Mad William's Jehovah incarnate speaking in the tones of octogenerian decrepitude! A god who listens as if attentively, and hears not a word. . . . Perhaps,—why not . . . I am a man of imagination . . ."

Grim, determined, just then his wife came into the room. The two old men stirred, rose ponderously, and in silence shook hands.

IV

"Hullo, Ilsa."

"Hello, there, master musician. Awfully nice of you to've come."

Throughout her meteoric career Ilsa Menteith had been the topic of clubroom confabulation entered upon in an attempt exactly to define her attraction, and ending invariably in puzzled shrugs. There are women made for laughter, or for languor, for speech, eye-play, lithe movement, anodynous repose,—lovely women who, realizing the potency of their most salient asset, propel it unerringly in the grace of a gesture, the dart of a lambent orb. None of her attributes could be designated the Menteith's most living charm, neither the timbre of her carolling laugh, the poise of her carriage, nor her green eyes' chatoyant allure. Many another damsel possessing charms, of equiponderant value exhaled in composite with far more finesse, many another wittier, tenderer, more beautiful, more adequately equipped to outdazzle, outpassion, outmaneuver, had lost in emulative joust to this fiery-haired woman of little guile.

Her most obvious attractions she seemed deliberately to belittle, intentionally to expunge. A supple body, slender to a fault, was never permitted the sinuosity it suggested. No one had ever extolled her green eyes as mystic; for all their undulant luminosity, her wide-open gaze was direct and ingenuous as the glance of an unsophisticated boy. Without a tinge of color there was yet no deadness to her nacreous skin,—it irradiated life, and joy, while, rather than a wound, the curled scarlet lips suggested something artless, something candid and engaging. Accoutred by nature for the rôle of an inscrutable enchantress, she chose to play another part, and, without entirely obliterating the maternal and infantile, emphasized the good-fellow note so successfully that with her entrance into a room crowded with more beautiful women, even the man propense to diminutive daintiness with his desire's embodiment seated beside him, even the man who sought languishing opulence, and was looking into its eyes, turned to her with more than interest on their faces.

Oddly enough, too, despite her manifold attractions, the many who had sought in vain for her favor never developed any of the chagrin of disgruntled suitors, while, as for her quondam spouses, none of the four had been known ever to speak disparagingly of her either before or after the rupture. Hers was a charm light, volatile and excessively engaging, in no wise suggestive of profundities and violent amours. And she herself had once declared that it was her pride never in her life to have inspired a profound and lasting passion. At the time that her fourth divorce was being made the chief topic of club-room gossip,

her first husband discussed her among a circle of friends in a fashion all present adjudged conclusive and eminently fair.

"She's untrammelled with soul," he declared, "and that's her chief charm. She has red hair and green eyes, but she's not temperamental. Her name is Ilsa, but she's not temperamental. There's something feline about her, and yet she's not temperamental. No sooner you see her come in at a door with her wide-open smile and blithe eyes, but you think, 'Here's a ripping good sportsman.' She wouldn't look at any but an affluent suitor, but what difference does that make? I know perfectly well that she wouldn't have considered me for a moment if the coffers hadn't been brim full, and I like her none the less for that. She made an excellent wife for the time being, and knew when the game was up. She's not the sort to pursue you when you're finished, or throw you over before you are, not the sort to exact adherence after things begin to pall, nor yet the sort that affects heart agony, and depths, and other tiresome things. She's simply the kind one plays around with for a few stimulating years, and then quits in mutual good-will. And she knows it, is content with her part, and plays the game well, like a clever business woman. Never negotiates a bargain sale, on the one hand, and never goes in for fleecing, on the other. Extraordinarily refreshing, that woman. Would there were more Ilsas!"

In the fluttering candle-light she was standing now, erect as always, eyes flashing their laughter at the man who faced her. That she was not strictly beautiful never struck any but women in her presence, and in no wise troubled her. The jaws and chin were a little too heavy, but successfully counterbalanced by the insouciance of a slightly tip-tilted nose. The eyes a trifle too large, the lips a trifle too full, every defect of feature was completely annihilated by the impression she gave of dazzling, joyous luminosity. This evening a trailing gown of old-gold chiffon enswathed her entirely, so high at the throat as to touch her chin and ears, and with sleeves falling well below the wrists.

"Oh, Chris," she carolled, "it's droll seeing you so awfully well-dressed, and suave looking, and everything. Who'd think that five years ago you went in for Byron collars, and Italian table-d'hôtes, and life missions, and such things? I admit I've missed my guess,—never dreamt the youth who wanted to steer me from worldly standards would ever escape from his pseudoaesthetic rut. And here you are, America's first and only master composer, serving us Debussy virilized

à la Strauss, austered à la Brahms, gayed up à la Ravel, and,—well made awfully novel and winning à la Christopher Ritchie whom I once threw down. . . . Splendid!"

She had a habit of topping her speeches with a "Splendid!" At the word her voice throbbed and rang out, while her eyes sparkled with more brilliance. It was as if the sense of enjoyment she imparted to her every utterance, her every look, were epitomized in the way she caressed the word.

The man smiled. Prematurely grey, and with a slight stoop to his shoulders, he was distinguished looking in an unobtrusive way suggestive at once of softness and underlying adamant. Lips somewhat full and indefinite proclaimed an indolence at odds with the trenchancy that shot from penetrant grey eyes.

"Want to grog it up a bit?" She pointed to the table where whiskey and soda bottles stood. He nodded, and indicating that he should play host, she sat watching him, her lips parted, her chin pillowed in her hands.

"Do you know, it's most awfully nice and like you, Chris, to have done what I asked in my note. It's an unholy journey up here to the city limits, but I wanted so badly to see you. Tell me, were you surprised to hear from me? Pleased? Annoyed? And why have you come as I asked you,—I, whom you haven't seen for five years, and who threw you down?"

He passed her glass and lit a cigarette before answering:

"I came because I'd do anything in the world for you, Ilsa, which didn't interfere with something I'd rather do. Because quite the kindest deed ever done me was your abrupt dismissal five years ago."

"And I asked you to call, because tonight I wanted to see the only potential life-mate I've ever rejected. Tell me, Chris,—I'm curious. How long did you feel crushed after I turned you down in favor of spouse number three? How long did the rancour last?"

"One day of anguish," he answered after a moment, "another of unhappiness, three full of schemes for vengeance, five of vague unrest. Ten days, Ilsa."

"And then what,—another girl?"

"Not immediately. Then I discarded the Byron collar and had a hair-cut. Went to work, too,—on a symphonic poem, if I remember rightly. Miserable, immature mess it was, but nevertheless the first significant thing I'd ever—"

"Chris," she broke in laughing, "you don't mean to tell me I was

your inspiration?" Leaning across the table, she laid her fingers lightly on his hand.

"*À chaque saint sa chandelle*," he replied, contemplating her perfectly manicured nails. "I was twenty-five—high time to be done with mooning adolescence, and get down to work. You taught me the incidental charm of women, and instead of letting me grow gradually tired, you were kind enough to refuse me, and left behind, after the first few days, a pleasant memory. Thanks awfully."

"That's just what I, too, have to say," she commented. "Thanks awfully, Chris. I've never been really in love, but I came closest to it with you. Thanks for having been long-haired and unkempt looking. Thanks for having disparaged my mundane aims. Thanks even for those dreadful jade earrings you gave me,—you remember? As if my hair and eyes weren't enough to contend with, without having exotic, erotic jade earrings thrust upon me! If you hadn't done these ridiculous things I should have fallen in love with you, for you're the kind my sort falls in love with. There's a bit of the fascinating cad about you for all your gentle mouth. And you saved me from falling for *amants de coeur*,—they're as fatal as woman confidantes. Thanks!"

For a moment there was silence.

"How old are you?" he queried finally.

"Thirty-one."

"And you're telling me that in all these years I was your nearest approach to a genuine *amant de coeur*, that the four moneyed maintainers were the only favored ones?"

"Absolutely."

"H'm." He eyed her reflectively, the furrows of a slight frown indicating themselves on his forehead. "I believe you and dislike believing you. At any rate, why vaunt any such prudery? I'd imagine it a dubious asset; I'd imagine that even the open-eyed purchaser of costly wares would hesitate at such unswerving allegiance to Mammon. . . . Smacks a bit of the third-rate."

She withdrew her hand. "You silly. What do I want with lovers? All my inclinations and capacities were for the marriage game played, with changing partners, on a big scale. And I've stuck to my craft. . . . Come, Chris, don't look so disapproving."

He checked his frown and smiled. "I suppose there's your side to consider as well. *Au bon chat bon rat*. But don't you ever grow tired of the steady diet of roast beef and potatoes, and—"

"Pine for sugar and cream? Emphatically I do not. And give me credit

at least for consistency You know you quoted before this evening
À chaque saint sa chandelle "

"And I'll quote again *Caveat emptor* "

"Meaning?"

"Let the buyer be careful "

Even while her smile flashed, it lost a little of its sunniness, and her eyes narrowed slightly.

"Take care, Ilsa," he cautioned, "at this moment your expression tends to the sphinx-like you depise "

At his words she sprang to her feet and, leaning over the table toward him, laughed softly, mockingly

"I was almost angry,—and it's very, very seldom that I get angry Come, come, Chris, your remark was cheap The buyers haven't been cautious, didn't need to be, and never regretted not having been . . . There's a streak of the prude in you still Nothing is more puzzling to me than the way men, notably without moral scruples, grow crotchety over what they call legalized courtzezanship You get away from commonplace standards only to adopt them in another form. You make yourself a censor of immorals! Because I've always been quite respectably married, because I'm not sentimental, because it's been altogether pleasant, and I've had no heartaches and sufferings and *grandes passions*, then,—let the buyer be careful I'm crafty and nasty and liable to trick him!

"I'd been brought up in penury," she went on, lightly, "had no taste for it, and determined very early to put a lot of zest and care into the pursuit of avoiding it I admit freely that I've been out for the money from the start. I got me my husbands, all of them likable and excessively affluent chaps who enjoyed a few placid, respectable years with me as greatly as I did, and were complimentary enough to think it was worth the expenditures involved. . . . And let me tell you, you censor of immorals,—I've never ruined a man, never broken a man's heart, never uprooted a family, nor fleeced inordinately, never reproached, nor annoyed, nor clung when I was no longer wanted, never played the Tartuffe. There's a record for you! And on the other hand, I've never been hungry, nor ill-clad, nor unhappy. I've never played around with an out-and-out boob no matter what he was worth, never had anything but a very enjoyable time, and parted from each successive liege lord with a whacking good settlement, and not a trace of ill-will on either side! How's that for a record? Life's just been one *entente*

cordiale after another. . . . Splendid! . . . And what have you to say to that, you censor of immoralals?"

Her underlids were quivering. Her smile grew even more expansive and inviting. She walked around the table, and stood before him.

"Only that indignation suits you. You look very lovely to-night, Ilsa."

"Bother that!" With a toss of her head she backed away, and paced the floor, her eyes always on him, over her shoulder when her back was turned, full in his face, and glittering, as she approached. She walked very lightly, noiselessly, rapidly, her chin always high over the slender neck, lips always parted, big, even, milky teeth shining. The flickering candle-light cast an iridescence over her face, and the man who sat watching her, immobile and composed, followed with his sharp, grey eyes her every movement.

"I must try to convince you," she halted abruptly, and poised herself on the arm of his chair. "You look so sneerily disapproving as if I were some poor fool who had missed the vim of life. I've had my thrills, Chris—no nightingales, and roses, and Swiss *châlet* episodes, but I've had my thrills. Husband hunting is a tremendously exciting pursuit. When the victim's a bit wary. . . . To break down little by little the wall of only half-assumed indifference, to get him to talk, to argue, to look at you, to be interested. And then to watch for the next stage: the stupid ones tell you you're the only woman who understands them, the nice ones impress upon you how completely they understand and see through you. And there,—then . . . the crucial moment! It's stupendously stirring finally to hear the little break in the voice you've been waiting for, to touch the hands, and find them warm with just the finger-tips icy. Nothing nasty about it,—I don't particularly fancy troglodytic ardor,—but something a little tender, and reverent, and gentle. . . . And to know you've inspired it! It's tremendous,—as stimulating as listening to '*Ein Heldenleben*' or some such thing must be to you. . . . And what have you to say to that, censor of immoralals?"

"Only that old-gold chiffon makes for seductiveness, and you're bewitching by candle-light. But why the enswathement, Ilsa? All evening I've been wondering what made you seem a bit different, and it just struck me. Where are the dazzling neck and shoulders I remember of old? In altruism, why conceal the ornamental arms?"

For the first time her smile faded entirely. She darted a searching glance at him, and shifted her eyes.

"But I look as nice as ever? The unwonted,—er,—suppression of facts detracts, perhaps?"

"Not a whit."

"Good! Splendid!" From her face the fleeting shadow passed. She caught his hand in hers and suddenly laughed.

"He extols my allure, and seems a bit taken, but his hands are as cool and non-committal as a nice, crisp lettuce leaf. Turned ascetic, Chris?"

"No, but I'm broke and sad." Her hand still in his, he looked her over appraisingly. "You're certainly in form, Ilsa. But why the expended energy when you know symphonies aren't lucrative. Surely you don't consider me a potential fifth?"

She moved as if to lay her head on his shoulder, but quickly checked herself.

"Poor old Chris! Horrid thing, indigence, isn't it? I'm having a taste of it myself now."

He turned away, and glanced questioningly about the little room. Despite such impediments as ugly wall paper, and a built-in mantel of cheap wood, an agreeable, if by no means extraordinary effect had been produced. A buhl table aired its graces. On the wall he recognized a good Toulouse-Lautrec, under his feet an excellent if usual, Kerman-shah. There were soft colored draperies hung about,—a couch covered with gay cushions, a pair of Barye bronzes. No bulbs were lit under the hideous colored-glass dome, and the two tall candles in wrought-iron sticks enhanced the room's good points.

"And why the sudden penury, Ilsa? Why—this?" He waved his hands to indicate the surroundings.

"Because I'm poor now. Because the place is cheap, and moreover, clean, which the cheap places with,—you know, atmosphere and fire-places and things, never are. Because for the last year I've been flinging away the rewards of thrift as lavishly as ever I could."

"Why?"

"Oh, just because!" she retorted quickly. "Let's not talk about it. Let's return to our discussion. I don't fancy your condemnation of all my theories of life. I want to convince—"

"And I insist upon knowing," he cut in. "You've aroused my curiosity. Why the cessation of activities, and the flat in the Bronx? Why—"

"And I refuse to go on with the subject." Bending over him from the arm of the chair, she laid her fingers on his lips. . . .

Just then one of the candles sputtered, and went out. . . .

And, in a flash, the atmosphere changed. The street noises ceased abruptly, as if intermitted by the subtle influence, which as they looked into one another's faces, she as animated, he as collected as before, brought to her smile a quality of hesitant timidity, eradicated the softness about his lips, supplemented, with a mellifluent glow, the mordancy of his eyes. It was a trivial incident,—the extinction of a candle, but, with the dimmed light, an impalpable tenseness stole over them. Her face was in shadow; he saw only the glints in her russet hair, only the pellucid whiteness of the hand she withdrew slowly from his lips. After some minutes of absolute stillness, a little uneasily she stirred, and started to rise.

And as she stirred, the tension broke. With a quick movement he made to take her in his arms.

"Don't!" Her voice was a half gasp. With almost ferocious sinuosity, she eluded him, and sprang to her feet. He, too, rose.

"You're full of surprises, Ilsa. Why the virtuous indignation? Going in for grubbing and coyness as well as poverty these days?"

"Don't Chris." She made the mistake of lifting her head a trifle too high, of rendering her voice the decisive trifle too imperious.

"Rot!" In perfect equanimity, collected, tranquil, he faced her. She appeared to take courage at his composure, laughed uncertainly, started to cross the room. And at her first step with a quick, rough gesture he caught her to him.

"Don't, I tell you."

Piercingly her voice rang out this time, and, lifting her hands to his shoulders with a sudden outburst of unexpected energy which took him by surprise, landed him back into the armchair, an undignified, ridiculous figure.

"Don't!" she reiterated in a whisper.

A flush of anger flooded his face. "Very good, casta diva, I won't, never fear. Far be it from me to curtail even the most sporadic attack of the virtues. But I don't find them particularly amusing. One more guzzle,—" he filled a whiskey glass, and emptied it in a swallow,— "and I'll leave you in vestal security."

"But I don't want you to go just yet, Chris." Full of inveighing self-confidence, she half blocked his way. But with a courteous "Sorry," he slipped past, and, as she followed him out of the room, reached for his hat.

"But I don't want you to go. Don't be childish. You don't understand. . . ."

Persuasively she brought her smiling face close to his. "It's not disinclination or coquetry, dear. It's just—" suddenly her trilling laughter rang out,—"just bones, Chris!"

She ran her fingers along neck and shoulders. "Here,—and here,—and here,—all bones, and hollows, and ridges, and ugliness! I couldn't bear to have you touch them. That's why the high collar and the long sleeves. That's why the termination of activities. Oh, Chris, isn't it droll?" she carolled gleefully, "the dampfoot doctors,—they say I'm to mimi-camille!"

For an instant incredulity, and then blank astonishment inundated his face, as he stared at her standing before him, irradiate of life and joy.

"What's—what's this?" he stammered at last.

"Phthisis and tuberoses, nothing less, dear fellow." Motioning him to follow, she re-entered the room, and as he seated himself perplexedly, perched again on the arm of his chair.

"Don't look dumbfounded and appalled," she pleaded, laughing, "and above all else, don't wax compassionate. I'd always planned to quit about this time. Thirty's a good age to make one's getaway. I couldn't go on much longer acquiring husbands, it's against my principles pertinaciously to adhere after a year or two, and as for living on the spoils of my activities, could anything be duller than eventless middle age? I'm altogether ready, and willing, and content. Only . . . tuberculosis! Fate's always been nice and tractable and I rather fancied something unusual for a *dénouement*, an acute stomachache of some sort, for instance. . . . To sublimate the stomachache! There'd be something worthy of my steel. But can you imagine me the star of a 'Traviata' finish? Can you imagine me going in for pathos, and wan woe, and death-bed scenes? Can you imagine the women gloating their sympathy, and the men all uneasiness and white flowers? Do you realize I've powder on my face to hide the hectic flush, that I'm all doped up to keep from coughing, that very, very soon my eyes are due to 'shine with febrile intensity?' " She grimaced at the quotation.

"Chris, will you please smile. It's not the least bit tragic. You don't really imagine I'd stand for any such foolery, do you? No! I've enjoyed the world so immensely that I don't at all mind leaving it. But in my own way! I've always had things my own way, and I'll have them my own way to the finish."

He looked up at her quickly. Hair, eyes, gown, skin, teeth, all shimmered. She seemed lustrous with the joy of existence. And watching her, even as his face paled slightly, he broke out into laughter.

"It's—it's simply impossible to feel sorry for you, Ilsa, while you sit beaming there. What's it to be, chloral or a jewelled poniard?"

"Poniard nothing! Daggers imply remorse, poison despair. It's to be a solid serviceable forty-four—and kindly omit flowers."

"*Coup de théâtre*, eh? Sublimate the revolver shot?"

"*Coup de théâtre*? Never in my life have I striven for effects. *Coup d'état*, rather. I'll purge the revolver shot of sentimentality, disconnect it from the idea of melodrama villainesses' sad ends. . . . I'm not a bit unhappy, not a bit repentant, or dissatisfied, or unwilling. In fact I rather fancy just such a stimulating exit, and happy ending to the tale."

She leaned her head against his shoulder, and for a long time neither spoke. The candle flickered as if merrily; her smile was as bright as ever. Finally, slipping from the chair, she went over to the couch, and threw herself full length upon it, her hands clasped at the back of her neck. A translucent quality to her loveliness gave her an effect almost of other-worldliness, drew him to her, impelled him to rise, approach and with a frown of perplexity rather than censure, look steadily into the eyes that laughed up into his. At length she spoke:

"You still look a bit disapproving . . . I'm not such a much, eh, Chris?"

"Not such as any too much, bu—but splendid, old girl."

As she noted the break in his voice her eyes gleamed, and she caught his hand.

"Hot, and with icy finger tips," she whispered, "and you look gentle, tender, and a little awed, Chris, dear."

He bent over, kissed her quietly, and turned away.

Stretching her arms in lazy ecstasy, "Splendid!" she breathed. "The culminant thrill! Tenderness without desire, tenderness volatile, and therefore of lasting value—the one thing I've always wanted from men. . . . And despite the bones! And from my one almost *amant de coeur*! Now I know I'm going in my prime . . . now I know I've reached the apogée!

"Oh, Chris, dear," she went on, shaking her head, "why do you still look a little discontented—as if things weren't quite as they should be? Come here—sit beside me—here, on the edge of the couch, and listen. . . . I'll make you understand. . . ."

Slowly she raised herself a little; leaned on her elbow; propped her chin in her hand.

"You've not been at your best tonight, Chris. You've sneered a little, and sentimentalized a little, and been a bit childish and—troglodytic as well. But you're a big man, a great man. I've heard your music. I know. And I think I know a little, a very, very little, about the great man's soul. Life's a sorry business to you, isn't it? A jumble and a joke? Just a long series of meaningless oscillations between the gutter and the stars? And you can't conceive, can you, of people absolutely honest with themselves finding it all delightful? I have, and therefore in a measure, unwillingly you condemn me, find me cheap and shallow . . . Oh, but Chris, I confess to cheapness and shallowness—I glory in it. . . . Listen well. . . ."

She slipt her arms about his neck, and proceeded, with her cheek against his:

"You know music. You know women. And, above all, you, the musician, must know sentimental women. What's music to them? A stimulant to the emotions, nothing more. They wax weepy over a Chopin nocturne, sentimental over Puccini, amorous over Tschaikowsky, sleepy over Brahms—and then say how they love the art, subscribe to symphony concerts, lionize the virtuosi, meddle with what should inspire awe. I've seen 'em; I know. And that's how they are in every way, inquisitive, meddling creatures always trying to mould a man's destiny, to ruin him, to reform him, to overturn no matter what, in no matter what way. I've watched the harpies many a time. . . ."

"Well, I don't pretend to understand music, nor to love it particularly. I hear Beethoven's Fifth—know that it's something stupendous and super-earthly, but don't feel, and don't pretend to feel, that it's so. I know it's something too big for me to understand, and don't meddle. And I've never in any way meddled. The only destiny I chose to mould was my own, and I've moulded it—according to my cheapness and shallowness, if you will, but according to a cheapness and shallowness which I never sought to hide, which never hurt a soul, and never made me ashamed. My stars—they're close to your gutter, Chris, but at any rate I've grasped them, and they please me!

"And do you know"—sitting bolt upright, she continued in whispered transport—"there's just where my significance, Ilsa Menteith's significance, will lie. Unceasing conflict, discontent, vacillation,

striving, attainment without fulfilment—I've seen so much of that, and many a time lately I've lain here all day puzzling it out. They're the things that you, that all big beings contend with. I'm not big, I'm not even as much as a high-bred rounder—I'm just . . . middle-class! But praiseworthy, never-before-quite-attained-middle-class! I've had material, middle-class aims and ends, but I've achieved them, and they've made me happy. . . . And I've never, never meddled with the big things that didn't concern me. I spent my early years among the middle classes, I belong to them, and I'm making my *hejira*—here, in the Bronx, among my middle-class brothers and sisters. There's a little old man in this very house, a fat, slothful old man, a sanctimonious-looking little man with lewd lips—typical of them all, typical of the worst of them, of their crassness, and sluggishness, and meddlesomeness. Well, to-morrow there'll be a big sensation, and I tell you, they all—not only the distinct types who live here, but middle-class plutocrats, middle-class rowdy girls, middle-class what-nots as well—all of them, I tell you, will realize that I was one of them, and the first one absolutely to justify them. My life—Ilsa Menteith's life, will have had a real meaning! They'll pause, and ponder, and understand, if only dimly. . . . And I'll be a symbol, a prophecy, a lesson, a watchword, a rallying cry! You'll see!"

She fell back among the pillows, panting in ardent exhaustion. With a touch of sadness, the man smiled into her enthusiastic eyes:

"Better not do it, Ilsa. You'll be an overnight sensation, that's all—copy for the sob-sisters, another opportunity for the pachyderms to sentimentalize, and flay the transgressor, and—"

"Sentimentalize? Flay the transgressor?" she broke in, "You're quite mad to think it, for why in heaven's name should they, Chris, dear? Prudishness and hypocrisy—there're the great middle-class attributes. Well, I've been a prude. I've insisted upon legitimized alliances. And I've been a hypocrite in this very insistence, for no one realized more keenly than I that material advantages were what I was after, that I'd have gotten them in the usual way if this one hadn't been successful, and that my game was merely a version of the jaded, old game. . . . But I haven't meddled, and I haven't sentimentalized, and they'll see. . . ."

"You poor darling," he interrupted gently. "You're nothing but a wildly romantic, misguided darling for all your brave words. Not a one of them will understand."

Her lips drooped for an instant.

"You mean, Chris—my life—just a muddle, just a jumble—like everyone else's?"

"Just a hopeless muddle, dear."

"And they'll have a garbled version of it?"

"They'll be as sure they've penetrated its meaning as you are—as I am. And they'll be as wrong as you and I probably are. Sometimes, Ilsa . . . sometimes I think of a deity all of whose majesty, all of whose augustness and omniscience lies behind the fact that he doesn't pretend ever to understand his own creation."

Very tenderly he pressed her unresisting head to his shoulder, and stroked the silken hair, as he whispered:

"Don't do it, Ilsa. Not because it will be a futile thing, but because you'll be in for a few excessively nasty hours before the—the culmination. Stick to the deathbed finish fate's ordained. You can do it gracefully. You've done everything gracefully. You—"

But springing to her feet, "I'll not have it so!" she broke in, "You're the only one that's hopelessly muddled. I see it all so clearly. And they—if only dimly, if only each in his own, vague way, they'll understand, too, and they won't forget me! It's going to be exactly as I say. . . . Splendid!"

Just then the other candle sputtered, and went out. In the darkness he could discern only the glint of her teeth as she smiled.

A church bell in the vicinity tolled ten times. In silence she waited for the last stroke, and then stentched out her hand.

"Good-night, Chris. Good luck with the oboes, and bassoons and things. . . . I'm going game?"

"Don't do——"

At her blithe smile he stopped short, and shrugged his shoulders, "One can't remonstrate." And after another pause:

"You're going game, Ilsa. . . . All luck in limbo, dear."

As he opened the door, a light from the hall gave him his final view of her. Vague, indistinct in the dimness, she seemed not so much a being as an impression—of a dauntlessness, a vim, a joy, of a smile—she seemed a wraith abrim with the verve of existence. . . .

At the landing he passed a pretty young woman in a pink kimono. In the lower hall he experienced an unpleasant feeling as of being peered upon through closed doors. And, going out into the street, in his abstraction he almost knocked over a little, fat old man.

NARCISSUS

by Robert Bridges

Almighty wondrous everlasting
Whether in a cradle of astral whirlfire
Or globed in a piercing star thou slumb'rest
 The passionless body of God:
Thou deep i' the core of earth—Almighty!—
From numbing stress and gloom profound
Madest escape in life desirous
 To embroider her thin-spun robe.

'Twas down in a wood—they tell—
In a running water thou sawest thyself
Or leaning over a pool. The sedges
 Were twinn'd at the mirror's brim
The sky was there and the trees—Almighty!—
A bird of a bird and white clouds floating
And seeing thou knewest thine own image
 And lov'd it beyond all else.

Then wondering didst thou speak
Of beauty and wisdom of art and worship
Didst build the fanes of Zeus and Apollo
 The high cathedrals of Christ.
All that we love is thine—Almighty!—
Heart-felt music and lyric song
Language the eager grasp of knowledge
 All that we think is thine.

But whence?—Beauteous everlasting!—
Whence and whither? Hast thou mistaken?
Or dost forget? Look again! Thou seest
 A shadow and not thyself.

BENEDICTION

by F. Scott Fitzgerald*

I

THE Baltimore Station was hot and crowded, so Lois was forced to stand by the telegraph desk for interminable, sticky seconds while a clerk with big front teeth counted and recounted a large lady's day message, to determine whether it contained the innocuous forty-nine words or the fatal fifty-one.

Lois, waiting, decided she wasn't quite sure of the address, so she took the letter out of her bag and ran over it again.

"Darling: *it began—*

"I understand and I'm happier than life ever meant me to be. If I could give you the things you've always been in tune with—but I can't, Lois; we can't marry and we can't lose each other and let all this glorious love end in nothing.

"Until your letter came, dear, I'd been sitting here in the half dark thinking and thinking where I could go and ever forget you; abroad, perhaps, to drift through Italy or Spain and dream away the pain of having lost you where the crumbling ruins of older, mellower civilizations would mirror only the desolation of my heart—and then your letter came.

"Sweetest, bravest girl, if you'll wire me I'll meet you in Wilmington—till then I'll be here just waiting and hoping for every long dream of you to come true.

HOWARD."

She had read the letter so many times that she knew it word by word, yet it still startled her. In it she found many faint reflections of the man who wrote it—the mingled sweetness and sadness in his dark eyes, the furtive, restless excitement she felt sometimes when he talked to her, his dreamy sensuousness that lulled her mind to sleep. Lois was nineteen and very romantic and curious and courageous.

The large lady and the clerk having compromised on fifty words, Lois took a blank and wrote her telegram. And there were no overtones to the finality of her decision.

* Most of Fitzgerald's fledgling work in fiction appeared in *The Smart Set*, including some stories he believes are too immature to bear republishing. This delicately beautiful story was written when he first became master of his brilliant gifts.

It's just destiny—she thought—it's just the way things work out in this blamed world. If cowardice is all that's been holding me back there won't be any more holding back. So we'll just let things take their course, and never be sorry.

The clerk scanned her telegram:

*Arrived Baltimore today spend day with my brother meet me
Wilmington three P.M. Wednesday Love*

Lois.

"Fifty-four cents," said the clerk admiringly.

And never be sorry—thought Lois—and never be sorry—

II

Trees filtering light onto dappled grass. Trees like tall, languid ladies with feather fans coquetting airily with the ugly roof of the monastery. Trees like butlers, bending courteously over placid walks and paths. Trees, trees over the hills on either side and scattering out in clumps and lines and woods all through Maryland, delicate lace on the hems of many yellow fields, dark opaque backgrounds for flowered bushes or wild climbing gardens.

Some of the trees were very gay and young, but the monastery trees were older than the monastery which, by true monastic standards, wasn't very old at all. And, as a matter of fact, it wasn't technically called a monastery, but only a seminary; nevertheless it shall be a monastery here despite its Victorian architecture or its Edward VII additions, or even its Woodrow Wilsonian, patented, last-a-century roofing.

Out behind was the farm where half a dozen lay brothers were sweating lustily as they moved with deadly efficiency around the vegetable gardens. To the left, behind a row of elms, was an informal baseball diamond where three novices were being batted out by a fourth, amid great chasings and puffings and blowings. And in front as a great mellow bell boomed the half hour a swarm of black, human leaves were blown over the checker-board of paths under the courteous trees.

Some of these black leaves were very old with cheeks furrowed like the first ripples of a splashed pool. Then there was a scattering of middle-aged leaves whose forms when viewed in profile in their revealing gowns were beginning to be faintly unsymmetrical. These carried thick volumes of Thomas Aquinas and Henry James and Cardinal Mercier and Immanuel Kant and many bulging note-books filled with lecture data.

But most numerous were the young leaves; blonde boys of nineteen with very stern, conscientious expressions; men in the late twenties with a keen self-assurance from having taught out in the world for five years—several hundreds of them, from city and town and country in Maryland and Pennsylvania and Virginia and West Virginia and Delaware.

There were many Americans and some Irish and some tough Irish and a few French, and several Italians and Poles, and they walked informally arm and arm with each other in twos and threes or in long rows, almost universally distinguished by the straight mouth and the considerable chin—for this was the Society of Jesus, founded in Spain five hundred years before by a tough-minded soldier who trained men to hold a breach or a salon, preach a sermon or write a treaty, and do it and not argue. . . .

Lois got out of a bus into the sunshine down by the outer gate. She was nineteen with yellow hair and eyes that people were tactful enough not to call green. When men of talent saw her in a street-car they often furtively produced little stub-pencils and backs of envelopes and tried to sum up that profile or the thing that the eyebrows did to her eyes. Later they looked at their results and usually tore them up with wondering sighs.

Though Lois was very jauntily attired in an expensively appropriate traveling affair, she did not linger to pat out the dust which covered her clothes, but started up the central walk with curious glances at either side. Her face was very eager and expectant, yet she hadn't at all that glorified expression that girls wear when they arrive for a Senior Prom at Princeton or New Haven; still as there were no senior proms here perhaps it didn't matter.

She was wondering what he would look like, whether she'd possibly know him from his picture. In the picture, which hung over her mother's bureau at home, he seemed very young and hollow-cheeked and rather pitiful, with only a well-developed mouth and an ill-fitting probationer's gown to show that he had already made a momentous decision about his life. Of course he had been only nineteen then and now he was thirty-six—didn't look like that at all; in recent snap-shots he was much broader and his hair had grown a little thin—but the impression of her brother she had always retained was that of the big picture. And so she had always been a little sorry for him. What a life for a man! Seventeen years of preparation and he wasn't even a priest yet—wouldn't be for another year.

Lois had an idea that this was all going to be rather solemn if she let it be. But she was going to give her very best imitation of undiluted sunshine, the imitation she could give even when her head was splitting or when her mother had a nervous breakdown or when she was particularly romantic and curious and courageous. This brother of hers undoubtedly needed cheering up, and he was going to be cheered up, whether he liked it or not.

As she drew near the great, homely front door she saw a man break suddenly away from a group and, pulling up the skirts of his gown, run toward her. He was smiling, she noticed, and he looked very big and—and reliable. She stopped and waited, knew that her heart was beating unusually fast.

"Lois!" he cried, and in a second she was in his arms. She was suddenly trembling.

"Lois!" he cried again, "why, this is wonderful! I can't tell you, Lois, how *much* I've looked forward to this. Why, Lois, you're beautiful!"

Lois gasped.

His voice, though restrained, was vibrant with energy and that odd sort of enveloping personality she had thought that she only of the family possessed.

"I'm mighty glad, too—Kieth."

She flushed, but not unhappily, at this first use of his name.

"Lois—Lois—Lois," he repeated in wonder. "Child, we'll go in here a minute, because I want you to meet the rector and then we'll walk around because I have a thousand things to talk to you about."

His voice became graver. "How's Mother?"

She looked at him for a moment and then said something that she had not intended to say at all, the very sort of thing she had resolved to avoid.

"Oh, Kieth—she's—she's getting worse all the time, every way."

He nodded slowly as if he understood.

"Nervous, well—you can tell me about that later. Now—"

She was in a small study with a large desk, saying something to a little, jovial, white-haired priest who retained her hand for some seconds.

"So this is Lois!"

He said it as if he had heard of her for years.

He entreated her to sit down.

Two other priests arrived enthusiastically and shook hands with her and addressed her as "Kieth's little sister," which she found she didn't mind a bit.

How assured they seemed; she had expected a certain shyness, reserve at least. There were several jokes unintelligible to her, which seemed to delight everyone, and the little Father Rector referred to the trio of them as "dim old monks," which she appreciated, because of course they weren't monks at all. She had a lightning impression that they were especially fond of Kieth—the Father Rector had called him "Kieth" and one of the others had kept a hand on his shoulder all through the conversation. Then she was shaking hands again and promising to come back a little later for some ice-cream, and smiling and smiling and being rather absurdly happy . . . she told herself that it was because Kieth was so delighted in showing her off.

Then she and Kieth were strolling along a path, arm in arm, and he was informing her what an absolute jewel the Father Rector was.

"Lois," he broke off suddenly, "I want to tell you before we go any further how much it means to me to have you come up here. I think it was—mighty sweet of you. I know what a gay time you've been having."

Lois gasped. She was not prepared for this. At first when she had conceived the plan of taking the hot journey down to Baltimore, staying the night with a friend and then coming out to see her brother, she had felt rather consciously virtuous, hoped he wouldn't be priggish or resentful about her not having come before—but walking here with him under the trees seemed such a little thing, and surprisingly a happy thing.

"Why, Kieth," she said quickly, "you know I couldn't have waited a day longer. I saw you when I was five, but of course I didn't remember, and how could I have gone on without practically ever having seen my only brother."

"It was mighty sweet of you, Lois," he repeated.

Lois blushed—he *did* have personality.

"I want you to tell me all about yourself," he said after a pause. "Of course, I have a general idea what you and mother did in Europe those fourteen years, and then we were all so worried, Lois, when you had pneumonia and couldn't come down with mother—let's see, that was two years ago—and then, well, I've seen your name in the papers, but it's all been so unsatisfactory. I haven't known you, Lois."

She found herself analyzing his personality as she analyzed the personality of every man she met. She wondered if the effect of—of intimacy that he gave was bred by his constant repetition of her name. He said it as if he loved the word, as if it had an inherent meaning to him.

"Then you were at school," he continued.

"Yes, at Farmington. Mother wanted me to go to a convent—but I didn't want to."

She cast a side glance at him to see if he would resent this.

But he only nodded slowly.

"Had enough convents abroad, eh?"

"Yes—and Kieth, convents are different there anyway. Here even in the nicest ones there are so many *common* girls."

He nodded again.

"Yes," he agreed, "I suppose there are, and I know how you feel about it. It grated on me here at first, Lois, though I wouldn't say that to anyone but you; we're rather sensitive, you and I, to things like this."

"You mean the men here?"

"Yes, some of them of course were fine, the sort of men I'd always been thrown with, but there were others; a man named Regan, for instance—I hated the fellow, and now he's about the best friend I have. A wonderful character, Lois; you'll meet him later. Sort of man you'd like to have with you in a fight."

Lois was thinking that Kieth was the sort of man she'd like to have with *her* in a fight.

"How did you—how did you first happen to do it?" she asked, rather shyly, "to come here, I mean. Of course mother told me the story about the Pullman car."

"Oh, that—" he looked rather annoyed.

"Tell me that. I'd like to hear you tell it."

"Oh, it's nothing, except what you probably know. It was evening and I'd been riding all day and thinking about—about a hundred things, Lois, and then suddenly I had a sense that someone was sitting across from me, felt that he'd been there for sometime and had a vague idea that he was another traveler. All at once he leaned over toward me and I heard a voice say—'I want you to be a priest, that's what I want.' Well, I jumped up and cried out—'Oh, my God, not that!'—made an idiot of myself before about twenty people; you see there

wasn't anyone sitting there at all. A week after that I went to the Jesuit College in Philadelphia and crawled up the last flight of stairs to the rector's office on my hands and knees."

There was another silence and Lois saw that her brother's eyes wore a far-away look, that he was staring unseeingly out over the sunny fields. She was stirred by the modulations of his voice and the sudden silence that seemed to flow about him when he finished speaking.

She noticed now that his eyes were of the same fibre as hers, with the green left out, and that his mouth was much gentler, really, than in the picture—or was it that the face had grown up to it lately. He was getting a little bald just on top of his head. She wondered if that was from wearing a hat so much. It seemed awful for a man to grow bald and no one to care about it.

"Were you—pious when you were young, Kieth?" she asked. "You know what I mean. Were you religious? If you don't mind these personal questions."

"Yes," he said with his eyes still far away—and she felt that his intense abstraction was as much a part of his personality as his attention. "Yes, I suppose I was, when I was—sober."

Lois thrilled slightly.

"Did you drink?"

He nodded.

"I was on the way to making a bad hash of things." He smiled and, turning his grey eyes on her, changed the subject.

"Child, tell me about mother. I know it's been awfully hard for you there, lately. I know you've had to sacrifice a lot and put up with a great deal and I want you to know how fine of you I think it is. I feel, Lois, that you're sort of taking the place of both of us there."

Lois thought quickly how little she had sacrificed; how lately she had constantly avoided her nervous, half-invalid mother.

"You shouldn't be sacrificed to age, Kieth," she said steadily.

"I know," he sighed "and you oughtn't to have the weight on your shoulders, child. I wish I were there to help you."

She saw how quickly he had turned her remark and instantly she knew what this quality was that he gave off. He was *sweet*. Her thoughts went off on a side-track and then she broke the silence with an odd remark.

"Sweetness is hard," she said suddenly.

"What?"

"Nothing," she denied in confusion. "I didn't mean to speak aloud."

I was thinking of something—of a conversation with a man named Freddy Kebble."

"Maury Kebble's brother?"

"Yes," she said, rather surprised to think of his having known Maury Kebble. Still there was nothing strange about it. "Well, he and I were talking about sweetness a few weeks ago. Oh, I don't know—I said that a man named Howard—that a man I knew was sweet and he didn't agree with me and we began talking about what sweetness in a man was. He kept telling me I meant a sort of soppy softness, but I knew I didn't—yet I didn't know exactly how to put it. I see now. I meant just the opposite. I suppose real sweetness is a sort of hardness—and strength."

Kieth nodded.

"I see what you mean. I've known old priests who had it."

"I'm talking about young men," she said, rather defiantly.

"Oh!"

They had reached the now deserted baseball diamond and, pointing her to a wooden bench, he sprawled full length on the grass.

"Are these *young* men happy here, Kieth?"

"Don't they look happy, Lois?"

"I suppose so, but those *young* ones, those two we just passed—have they—are they—"

"Are they signed up?" he laughed. "No, but they will be next month."

"Permanently?"

"Yes—unless they break down mentally or physically. Of course, in a discipline like ours a lot drop out."

"But those *boys*. Are they giving up fine chances outside—like you did?"

He nodded.

"Some of them."

"But, Kieth, they don't know what they're doing. They haven't had any experience of what they're missing."

"No, I suppose not."

"It doesn't seem fair. Life has just sort of scared them at first. Do they all come in so *young*?"

"No, some of them have knocked around, led pretty wild lives—Regan, for instance."

"I should think that sort would be better," she said meditatively, "men that had *seen* life."

"No," said Kieth earnestly, "I'm not sure that knocking about gives a man the sort of experience he can communicate to others. Some of the broadest men I've known have been absolutely rigid about themselves. And reformed libertines are a notoriously intolerant class. Don't you think so, Lois?"

She nodded, still meditative, and he continued:

"It seems to me that when one weak person goes to another, it isn't help they want; it's a sort of companionship in guilt, Lois. After you were born, when mother began to get nervous she used to go and weep with a certain Mrs. Comstock. Lord, it used to make me shiver. She said it comforted her, poor old mother. No, I don't think that to help others you've got to show yourself at all. Real help comes from a stronger person whom you respect. And their sympathy is all the bigger because it's impersonal."

"But people want human sympathy," objected Lois. "They want to feel the other person's been tempted."

"Lois, in their hearts they want to feel that the other person's been weak. That's what they mean by human."

"Here in this old monkery, Lois," he continued with a smile, "they try to get all that self-pity and pride in our own wills out of us right at the first. They put us to scrubbing floors—and other things. It's like that idea of saving your life by losing it. You see we sort of feel that the less human a man is, in your sense of human, the better servant he can be to humanity. We carry it out to the end, too. When one of us dies his family can't even have him then. He's buried here under a plain wooden cross with a thousand others."

His tone changed suddenly and he looked at her with a great brightness in his grey eyes.

"But way back in a man's heart there are some things he can't get rid of—and one of them is that I'm awfully in love with my little sister."

With a sudden impulse she knelt beside him in the grass and, leaning over, kissed his forehead.

"You're hard, Kieth," she said, "and I love you for it—and you're sweet."

III

Back in the reception room Lois met a half dozen more of Kieth's particular friends; there was a young man named Jarvis, rather pale

and delicate looking, who, she knew, must be a grandson of old Mrs. Jarvis at home, and she mentally compared this ascetic with a brace of his riotous uncles.

And there was Regan with a scarred face and piercing intent eyes that followed her about the room and often rested on Kieth with something very like worship. She knew then what Kieth had meant about "a good man to have with you in a fight."

He's the missionary type—she thought vaguely—China or something.

"I want Kieth's sister, to show us what the shimmy is," demanded one young man with a broad grin.

Lois laughed.

"I'm afraid the Father Rector would send me shimmying out the gate. Besides, I'm not an expert."

"I'm sure it wouldn't be best for Jimmy's soul anyway," said Kieth solemnly. "He's inclined to brood about things like shimmys. They were just starting to do the—maxixe, wasn't it, Jimmy?—when he became a monk and it haunted him his whole first year. You'd see him when he was peeling potatoes, putting his arm around the bucket and making irreligious motions with his feet."

There was a general laugh in which Lois joined.

"An old lady who comes here to Mass sent Kieth this ice-cream," whispered Jarvis under cover of the laugh, "because she'd heard you were coming. It's pretty good, isn't it?"

Lois felt the rims of her eyes growing suddenly red.

IV

Then half an hour later over in the chapel things suddenly went all wrong. It was several years since Lois had been at Benediction and at first she was thrilled by the gleaming monstrance with its central spot of white, the air rich and heavy with incense, and the sun shining through the stained glass window of St. Francis Xavier overhead and falling in warm red tracery on the cassock of the man in front of her, but at the first notes of the *O Salutaris Hostia* a heavy weight seemed to descend upon her soul. Kieth was on her right and young Jarvis on her left and she stole uneasy glances at both of them.

What's the matter with me? she thought impatiently.

She looked again. Was there a certain coldness in both their profiles, that she had not noticed before—a pallor about the mouth and a

curious set expression in their eyes. She shivered slightly, they were like dead men.

She felt her soul recede suddenly from Kieth's. This was her brother—this, this unnatural person. She caught herself in the act of a little laugh.

"What is the matter with me?"

She passed her hand over her eyes and the weight increased. The incense sickened her and a stray, ragged note from one of the tenors in the choir grated on her ear like the shriek of a slate pencil. She fidgeted and raising her hand to her hair touched her forehead, found moisture on it.

"It's hot in here, hot as the deuce."

Again she repressed a faint laugh and then in an instant the weight upon her heart suddenly diffused into cold fear. . . . It was that candle on the altar. It was all wrong—wrong. Why didn't somebody see it. There was something *in* it. There was something coming out of it, taking form and shape above it.

She tried to fight down her rising panic, told herself it was the wick. If the wick wasn't straight candles did something—but they didn't do this! With incalculable rapidity a force was gathering within her, a tremendous, assimilative force, drawing from every sense, every corner of her brain, and as it surged up inside her she felt an enormous, terrified repulsion. She drew her arms in close to her side, away from Kieth and Jarvis.

Something in that candle . . . she was leaning forward—in another moment she felt she would go forward toward it—didn't anyone see it? . . . anyone?

"Ugh!"

She felt a space beside her and something told her that Jarvis had gasped and sat down very suddenly . . . then she was kneeling and as the flaming monstrosity slowly left the altar in the hands of the priest, she heard a great rushing noise in her ears—the crash of the bells was like hammer blows . . . and then in a moment that seemed eternal a great torrent rolled over her heart—there was a shouting there and a lashing as of waves. . . .

. . . She was calling, felt herself calling for Kieth, her lips mouthing the words that would not come:

"Kieth, Oh, my God! *Kieth!*"

Suddenly she became aware of a new presence, something external,

in front of her, consummated and expressed in warm red tracery. Then she knew. It was the window of St. Francis Xavier. Her mind gripped at it, clung to it finally and she felt herself calling again endlessly, impotently—Kieth—Kieth!

Then out of a great stillness came a voice:

"Blessed be God."

With a gradual rumble sounded the response rolling heavily through the chapel—

"Blessed be God."

The words sang instantly in her heart; the incense lay mystically and sweetly peaceful upon the air, and *the candle on the altar went out.*

"Blessed be His Holy Name."

"Blessed be His Holy Name."

Everything blurred into a swinging mist. With a sound half gasp, half cry, she rocked on her feet and reeled backward into Kieth's suddenly outstretched arms.

"Lie still, child."

She closed her eyes again. She was on the grass outside, pillowed on Kieth's arm, and Regan was dabbing her head with a cold towel.

"I'm all right," she said quietly.

"I know, but just lie still a minute longer. It was too hot in there. Jarvis felt it, too."

She laughed as Regan again touched her gingerly with the towel.

"I'm all right," she repeated.

But though a warm peace was filling her mind and heart she felt oddly broken and chastened as if someone had held her stripped soul up and laughed.

VI

Half an hour later she walked leaning on Kieth's arm down the long central path toward the gate.

"It's been such a short afternoon," he sighed, "and I'm so sorry you were sick, Lois."

"Kieth, I'm feeling fine now, really; I wish you wouldn't worry."

"Poor old child. I didn't realize that Benediction'd be a long service for you after your hot trip out here and all."

She laughed cheerfully.

"I guess the truth is I'm not much used to Benediction. Mass is the limit of my religious exertions."

She paused and then continued quickly:

"I don't want to shock you, Kieth, but I can't tell you how—how *inconvenient* being a Catholic is. It really doesn't seem to apply any more. As far as morals go, some of the wildest boys I know are Catholics. And the brightest boys—I mean the ones who think and read a lot, don't seem to believe in much of anything any more."

"Tell me about it. The bus won't be here for another half hour."

They sat down on a bench by the path.

"For instance Gerald Carter, he's published a novel. He absolutely roars when people mention immortality. And then Howa—well, another man I've known well, lately, who was Phi Beta Kappa at Harvard, says that no intelligent person can believe in Supernatural Christianity. He says Christ was a great socialist, though. Am I shocking you?"

She broke off suddenly.

Kieth smiled.

"You can't shock a monk. He's a professional shock absorber."

"Well," she continued, "that's about all. It seems so—so *narrow*. Church schools, for instance. There's more freedom about things that Catholic people can't see—like birth control."

Kieth winced, almost imperceptibly, but Lois saw it.

"Oh," she said quickly, "everybody talks about everything now."

"It's probably better that way."

"Oh, yes, much better. Well, that's all, Kieth. I just wanted to tell you why I'm a little—lukewarm, at present."

"I'm not shocked, Lois. I understand better than you think. We all go through those times. But I know it'll come out all right, child. There's that gift of faith that we have, you and I, that'll carry us past the bad spots."

He rose as he spoke and they started again down the path.

"I want you to pray for me sometimes, Lois. I think your prayers would be about what I need. Because we've come very close in these few hours, I think."

Her eyes were suddenly shining.

"Oh, we have, we have!" she cried. "I feel closer to you now than to anyone in the world."

He stopped suddenly and indicated the side of the path.

"We might—just a minute—"

It was a pieta, a life-size statue of the Blessed Virgin set within a semi-circle of rocks.

Feeling a little self-conscious she dropped on her knees beside him and made an unsuccessful attempt at prayer.

She was only half through when he rose. He took her arm again.

"I wanted to thank Her for letting us have this day together," he said simply.

Lois felt a sudden lump in her throat and she wanted to say something that would tell him how much it had meant to her, too. But she found no words.

"I'll always remember this," he continued, his voice trembling a little—"this summer day with you. It's been just what I expected. You're just what I expected, Lois."

"I'm awfully glad, Kieth."

"You see, when you were little they kept sending me snap-shots of you, first as a baby and then as a child in socks playing on the beach with a pail and shovel, and then suddenly as a wistful little girl with wondering, pure eyes—and I used to build dreams about you. A man has to have something living to cling to. I think, Lois, it was your little white soul I tried to keep near me—even when life was at its loudest and every intellectual idea of God seemed the sheerest mockery, and desire and love and a million things came up to me and said, 'Look here at me! See, I'm Life. You're turning your back on it!' All the way through that shadow, Lois, I could always see your baby soul flitting on ahead of me, very frail and very clear and wonderful."

Lois was crying softly. They had reached the gate and she rested her elbow on it and dabbed furiously at her eyes.

"And then later, child, when you were sick I knelt all one night and asked God to spare you for me—for I knew I wanted more then; He had taught me to want more. I wanted to know you moved and breathed in the same world with me. I saw you growing up, that white innocence of yours changing to a flame and burning to give light to other weaker souls. And then I wanted some day to take your children on my knee and hear them call the crabbed old monk Uncle Kieth."

He seemed to be laughing now as he talked.

"Oh, Lois, Lois, I was asking God for more than I wanted—the letters you'd write me and the place I'd have at your table. I wanted an awful lot, Lois, dear."

"You've got me, Kieth," she sobbed, "you know it, say you know it. Oh, I'm acting like a baby but I didn't think you'd be this way, and I—oh, Kieth— Kieth—"

He took her hand and patted it softly.

"Here's the bus. You'll come again, won't you?"

She put her hands on his cheeks and drawing his head down, pressed her tear-wet face against his.

"Oh, Kieth, brother, some day I'll tell you something!"

He helped her in, saw her take down her handkerchief and smile bravely at him, as the driver flicked his whip and the bus rolled off. Then a thick cloud of dust rose around it and she was gone.

For a few minutes he stood there on the road, his hand on the gatepost, his lips half parted in a smile.

"Lois," he said aloud in a sort of wonder, "Lois, Lois."

Later, some probationers passing noticed him kneeling before the pieta, and coming back after a time found him still there. And he was there until twilight came down and the courteous trees grew garrulous overhead and the crickets took up their burden of song in the dusky grass.

VII

The first clerk in the telegraph booth in the Baltimore Station whistled through his buck teeth at the second clerk:

"S'matter?"

"See that girl—no, the pretty one with the big black dots on her veil. Too late—she's gone. You missed somep'n."

"What about her?"

"Nothing. 'Cept she's damn good looking. Came in here yesterday and sent a wire to some guy to meet her somewhere. Then a minute ago she came in with a telegram all written out and was standin' there goin' to give it to me when she changed her mind or somep'n and all of a sudden tore it up."

"Hm."

The first clerk came around the counter and picking up the two pieces of paper from the floor put them together idly. The second clerk read them over his shoulder and subconsciously counted the words as he read. There were just thirteen.

This is in the way of a permanent goodbye. I should suggest Italy.

LOIS.

"Tore it up, eh?" said the second clerk.

THE THREE HERMITS

by William Butler Yeats

Three old hermits took the air
By a cold and desolate sea,
First was muttering a prayer,
Second rummaged for a flea.
On a windy stone, the third,
Giddy with his hundredth year
Sang unnoticed like a bird.

"Though the door of Death is near
And what waits behind the door,
Three times in a single day
I though upright on the shore,
Fall asleep when I should pray."
So the first but now the second.
"We're but given what we have earned,
When all thoughts and deeds are reckoned
So it's plain to be discerned
That the shades of holy men,
Who have failed being weak of will
Pass the door of birth again,
And are plagued by crowds, until
They've the passion to escape."
Moaned the other, "They are thrown
Into some most fearful shape."

But the second mocked his moan:
"They are not changed to anything,
Having loved God once, but maybe
To a poet or a king
Or a witty lovely lady."
While he'd rummaged rags and hair
Caught and cracked his flea; the third,
Giddy with his hundredth year
Sang unnoticed like a bird.

BALLADE OF YOUTH TO SWINBURNE

by Orrick Johns

O Poet, have you gone to lave
In the great sea that wooed your soul?
O Singer, who to England gave
Her brightest lore of love and dole—
In some sweet place beneath the roll
Of mighty waves you sing, I ween,
The Lesbian fragments you made whole
Who had a lute from Mitylene.

With cool-browed Sappho do you sing
Such loves as made her dark eyes glow,
While shining maidens nectar bring
And perfumed hyacinth bestow?
Or with Theocritus you go
Through meadows dressed in gold and green—
We would so dream of you, who know
You had a lute from Mitylene.

That "sad, bad, glad" Villon of France
Ere this has thanked you for the care
You bore him, and by lovely chance
Catullus smiled upon you there;
With bay-wreathed heads what joys you share
Along fleet days beyond the screen
Death lowered when you took the Stair,
Who had a lute from Mitylene!

ENVOI

O Death, his little brothers, we,
Who found that piercing song too keen,
Make mourn . . . "Dost thou know this was he
Who had a lute from Mitylene?"

FROM THE MEMOIRS OF A PRIVATE DETECTIVE

*by Dashiell Hammett**

WISHING to get some information from members of the W. C. T. U. in an Oregon city, I introduced myself as the secretary of the Butte Civic Purity League. One of them read me a long discourse on the erotic effects of cigarettes upon young girls. Subsequent experiments proved this trip worthless.

A man whom I was shadowing went out into the country for a walk one Sunday afternoon and lost his bearings completely. I had to direct him back to the city.

3

House burglary is probably the poorest paid trade in the world, I have never known anyone to make a living at it. But for that matter few criminals of any class are self-supporting unless they toil at something legitimate between times. Most of them, however, live on their women.

4

I know an operative who while looking for pickpockets at the Havre de Grace race track had his wallet stolen. He later became an official in an Eastern detective agency.

5

Three times I have been mistaken for a Prohibition agent, but never had any trouble clearing myself.

Taking a prisoner from a ranch near Gilt Edge, Mont., to Lewistown one night, my machine broke down and we had to sit there until day-

* This was written when the author of *The Maltese Falcon* and *The Thin Man* was still an operative for the Pinkerton Detective Agency.

light. The prisoner, who stoutly affirmed his innocence, was clothed only in overalls and shirt. After shivering all night on the front seat his morale was low, and I had no difficulty in getting a complete confession from him while walking to the nearest ranch early the following morning.

7

Of all the men embezzling from their employers with whom I have had contact, I can't remember a dozen who smoked, drank, or had any of the vices in which bonding companies are so interested.

I was once falsely accused of perjury and had to perjure myself to escape arrest.

9

A detective agency official in San Francisco once substituted "truthful" for "voracious" in one of my reports on the ground that the client might not understand the latter. A few days later in another report "simulate" became "quicken" for the same reason.

10

Of all the nationalities haled into the criminal courts, the Greek is the most difficult to convict. He simply denies everything, no matter how conclusive the proof may be; and nothing so impresses a jury as a bare statement of fact, regardless of the fact's inherent improbability or obvious absurdity in the face of overwhelming contrary evidence.

11

I know a man who will forge the impressions of any set of fingers in the world for \$50.

12

I have never known a man capable of turning out first-rate work in a trade, a profession or an art, who was a professional criminal.

13

I know a detective who once attempted to disguise himself thoroughly. The first policeman he met took him into custody.

14

I know a deputy sheriff in Montana who, approaching the cabin of a homesteader for whose arrest he had a warrant, was confronted by the homesteader with a rifle in his hands. The deputy sheriff drew his revolver and tried to shoot over the homesteader's head to frighten him. The range was long and a strong wind was blowing. The bullet knocked the rifle from the homesteader's hands. As time went by the deputy sheriff came to accept as the truth the reputation for expertness that this incident gave him, and he not only let his friends enter him in a shooting contest, but wagered everything he owned upon his skill. When the contest was held he missed the target completely with all six shots.

15

Once in Seattle the wife of a fugitive swindler offered to sell me a photograph of her husband for \$15. I knew where I could get one free, so I didn't buy it.

16

I was once engaged to discharge a woman's housekeeper.

17

The slang in use among criminals is for the most part a conscious, artificial growth, designed more to confuse outsiders than for any other purpose, but sometimes it is singularly expressive; for instance, *two-time loser*—one who has been convicted twice; and the older *gone to read and write*—found it advisable to go away for a while.

18

Pocket-picking is the easiest to master of all the criminal trades. Anyone who is not crippled can become an adept in a day.

19

In 1917, in Washington, D. C., I met a young woman who did not remark that my work must be very interesting.

20

Even where the criminal makes no attempt to efface the prints of his fingers, but leaves them all over the scene of the crime, the chances

are about one in ten of finding a print that is sufficiently clear to be of any value.

21

The chief of police of a Southern city once gave me a description of a man, complete even to a mole on his neck, but neglected to mention that he had only one arm.

22

I know a forger who left his wife because she had learned to smoke cigarettes while he was serving a term in prison.

23

Second only to "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" is "Raffles" in the affections of the daily press. The phrase "gentleman crook" is used on the slightest provocation. A composite portrait of the gentry upon whom the newspapers have bestowed this title would show a laudanum-drinker, with a large rhinestone horseshoe aglow in the soiled bosom of his shirt below a bow tie, leering at his victim, and saying: "Now don't get scared, lady, I ain't gonna crack you on the bean. I ain't a rough-neck!"

24

The cleverest and most uniformly successful detective I have ever known is extremely myopic.

25

Going from the larger cities out into the remote rural communities, one finds a steadily decreasing percentage of crimes that have to do with money and a proportionate increase in the frequency of sex as a criminal motive.

26

While trying to peer into the upper story of a roadhouse in northern California one night—and the man I was looking for was in Seattle at the time—part of the porch roof crumbled under me and I fell, spraining an ankle. The proprietor of the roadhouse gave me water to bathe it in.

27

The chief difference between the exceptionally knotty problem confronting the detective of fiction and that facing the real detective is that in the former there is usually a paucity of clues, and in the latter altogether too many.

28

I know a man who once stole a Ferris-wheel.

29

That the law-breaker is invariably soon or late apprehended is probably the least challenged of extant myths. And yet the files of every detective bureau bulge with the records of unsolved mysteries and uncaught criminals.

SUMMER RAIN

by Amy Lowell

All night our room was outer-walled with rain.
Drops fell and flattened on the tin roof,
And rang like little disks of metal.
Ping!—Ping!—and there was not a pin-point of silence between them.
The rain rattled and clashed,
And the slats of the shutters danced and glittered.
But to me the darkness was red-gold and crocus-colored
With your brightness,
And the words you whispered to me
Sprang up and flamed—orange torches against the rain,
Torches against the wall of cool, silver rain!

LOS ANGELES—THE CHEMICALLY PURE

*by Willard Huntington Wright**

WHAT of Los Angeles—America's one unpronounceable city? Her resources, her bank clearings, her Brobdingnagian fruits, her mellow temperature, the amount of her shipments, the unprecedented growth in her population—these things are familiar to the Easterner and the Westerner alike. Her fame has spread as has that of few other cities. The glories of her climate and her flora have been emblazoned across the skies in every corner of the United States. But leaving these facts to the statisticians, let us consider her character. What trait does she exhibit to the stranger? What temperament does she impose upon the tourist?

The Easterner who has never been to California, and who has come to look upon Los Angeles as the wonder city of America as regards growth and opportunity, will be startled to learn that she is the one city of her size in the United States, and perhaps in the world, whose personality is that of the rural pietist, of the rigid and uncompromising Puritan. She is obsessed with the spirit of crude democracy, of class abolition, of village fellowship, of suburban respectability. The amusements she offers to the outsider are the simple amusements of a bucolic existence. Her pleasure resorts are as unexciting as a church bazaar. Recreation adapted to cosmopolitan taste, aside from theatergoing, is rare. And if, after the theater the unregenerate tourist goes to a café for supper and lingers over the coffee, the waiters, more than likely, will have begun to pile the chairs on the tables at the further end of the room in preparation for the early morning moppers. At almost every point where the innocent stranger attempts to live his normal life of pleasure seeking, he will find himself thwarted by some ordinance, the primary object of which is to force Middle West moralities upon all inhabitants. Puritanism is the inflexible doctrine in Los Angeles.

Time was when a less pallid, a less senile régime held sway. Los Angeles has not always epitomized municipal prudery. In the past she

* This article caused a furore and a great jump in *The Smart Set's* circulation when it was published in March, 1913. It was Wright's first contribution to the magazine and it got him the job as editor.

wore vine leaves in her hair. She lured the newcomer with the sorceries of gaiety; she offered racy and satisfying entertainment for the traveling Don Juans. She was blithesomely indecent, imaginative, colorful. But not in the vulgar manner of the Barbary Coast of the old sultry days and nights. She was never blatant and crass, never aggressive and criminal. She wore her strumpet garbs with grace and delicacy. Her debaucheries were rarely without the perfume of romance. Her private dining rooms were not baroque and garish. Her lecheries never obtruded their flaming angles through the drab fabric of her pewholders' lives. Perhaps no city has had so well regulated a *demi-monde*, so inoffensive and decent a cocktail route as Los Angeles of the old days. She proffered all her indecencies with a grace, a quiet, a naïve mien, with an attitude almost Latin in its frankness.

The languorous atmosphere of her restricted district was no doubt due to the Spanish influence of an older day. Her bagnio houses clustered round the old adobes of Sonoratown within a stone's throw of the Church of Our Lady of the Angels. Here the sandaled padres in their long embroidered vestments chanted their vespers, while from across the Plaza, in profane competition, drifted the wheedling laughter of fragile señoritas. Los Angeles was never famous for her debaucheries, her vice, her midnight atrocities, as were many other cities of her class. And yet her menu was complete. Her *filles de joie* were dreams of pulchritude, loreleis, houris. Her cocktails were mixed with ineffable technique. Her wines were young but pure. Her cabbies were discreet and content with an honest living. Her police, too, were sagacious and comparatively honest. There were gay resorts at the beaches, seventeen miles distant. She had an excellent race-course, and friendly games of roulette. She maintained resorts to meet every pocketbook.

An honest city, a fascinating and sensible city, was Los Angeles then. But no more! Where, indeed, is the notorious Pearl Morton, with her ferocious bull pup, and the phthisical Violet? The Stone Front and the Antlers' Club are gone. A skyscraper stands on the spot where the *jeunesse dorée* used to dine on the veranda of the old Belmont Café. The most famous restaurants have lost their licenses; and two of the oldest cafés have recently built imposing structures which exude a newer and less romantic culture. New High Street is a row of cheap rooming houses, and east of Alameda are small manufacturing plants. Sonoratown is but a memory. Hypocrisy, like a vast fungus, has spread over the city's surface. Gone are the Eleusinian festivities. Silent is the click

of ivory chips, and deserted is Ascot Park. Her one carnival—*La Fiesta*—with its fancy costumes, its gay pageantry, its confetti throwing, died of inanition a decade ago. The lights of the north side are dark; and as the late carriages drive by, the curtains are never drawn. The Phrynes and Aspasias no longer ply their ancient trade. During the early morning hours no frou-frou of silk disturbs the sepulchral silence of the streets. You will look in vain for the flashing eye, the painted cheek, the silken ankle. No yellow-haired Laïses haunt the dark doorways of the downtown thoroughfares. The city's lights go out at twelve, and so does the drummer's hope. The taxicab banditti disappear. At 12.15 the streets are almost deserted.

Obviously not a city for nocturnal sybarites, for those hardy immortalists who see no harm in Pilsener after midnight. The current belief in Los Angeles is that there is something inherently and inalienably indecent (or at least indelicate) in that segment of the day between 12 P. M. and 5 A. M. Therefore these five hours constitute a bloomy hiatus, a funereal void, a sad and intolerable interregnum. And there is a good old medieval superstition afloat in Los Angeles that all those things which charm by their grace and beauty are wiles of the devil, and that only those things are decent which are depressing. Hence, the recent illumination and guarding of all public parks lest spooning, that lewd pastime, become prevalent. Hence, the Quakerish regulation of public dance halls. Hence, the stupid censorship of the theaters by professional moralists, a censorship so incredibly puerile that even Boston—good old Boston, which closed up "The Easiest Way"—will have to take second place. Hence, the silly legal pottering about the proper length of bathing suits at the beaches, the special election to decide whether or not one should be permitted to eat in saloons, and the fiery discussion as to the morality of displaying moving pictures of boxing matches.

Los Angeles is overrun with militant moralists, connoisseurs of sin, experts of biological purity. But let it be said that these chlorotic fellows put up a very good performance. As comedians they are deserving of very respectful consideration. And inasmuch as they are egged on by an exquisitely virtuous press, their grandiloquent sport of moral uplift, with its hot yearning to flay the sinner, goes triumphantly on. The traveling salesman and the joy-hunting tourist, however, too licentious to appreciate the lofty idealism symbolized by the bolted door and the extinguished light, make haste with their business and hie northward to a more lenient and gayer city.

To what is due this frenzy for virtue, this psychic debauch of prudery, this mad wallowing in the excelsior of Puritanism? Is it that the citizens of Los Angeles are nobler than the citizens of any other city of its size in the United States? Not at all. The explanation is a twofold one, and has its roots in the manner and character of growth of the city. In the first place, the inhabitants of Los Angeles are culled largely from the smaller cities of the Middle West—"leading citizens" from Wichita; honorary pallbearers from Emmetsburg; Good Templars from Sedalia; honest spinsters from Grundy Center—all commonplace people, many of them with small competencies made from the sale of farm lands or from the lifelong savings of small mercantile businesses. These good folks brought with them a complete stock of rural beliefs, pieties, superstitions and habits—the Middle West bed hours, the Middle West love of corned beef, church bells, *Munsey's Magazine*, union suits and missionary societies. They brought also a complacent and intransigent aversion to late dinners, malt liquor, grand opera and hussies. They are a sober and phlegmatic people, with a passion for marching in parades and wearing badges. They are victims of the sonorous platitude; at concerts they applaud the high notes, and they vote for their pastor's choice of candidate.

These yokels are motivated primarily by the village spirit. The Sunday school idea is no small factor in their political and sociological decisions. Having, by virtue of numbers, a large voice in municipal affairs, they govern Los Angeles as they would a village. The spirit of cosmopolitanism has not yet ravished their minds or inflamed their blood. Their bourgeois prejudices are the outposts of their toleration. They have a righteous abhorrence of shapely legs, and proceed to close the theaters, that no one else may bask in the charm of feminine parabolas. All who do not hold their beliefs are sinners. They would prohibit indulgence in those things which they hold to be impure. Their idea of government is a paternal one. They, the moral fathers, would chasten the recalcitrant children who look upon Sunday as a day of recreation, and who see no harm in cigarette smoking and an occasional bottle of wine. They are enraptured with the benign theory that morality is a matter of legal enactment. Los Angeles is colored with Iowan, Missourian and Kansan ideals.

Another reason for the hyper-morality of Los Angeles lies in the rapidity of its growth. The evolution from a town to a city is not merely one of numbers. Far from it, indeed. It is a growth of tempera-

ment as well, an educational and mental development. This takes time; the process is a slow and tedious one. It requires a change in point of view; and this is a matter of gradual metamorphosis. The very organisms of one's nature must be altered. The rustic attitude, strengthened by the teachings of generations, must be changed. There has not been sufficient time in the growth of Los Angeles to produce this change. In point of population she is a city (she numbers nearly half a million), but temperamentally she is an overgrown village. She has not yet been able to overcome her rustic narrow-mindedness. There still remain memories of the milk can, the new-mown hay, the Chautauqua lecturers, the plush albums, the hamlet devotions and the weekly baths. And so the petty reforms and sentimental corrective agitations, such as constitute the daily life of a small town, are to be found in Los Angeles, blooming magnificently and shedding benevolent and penetrating perfume.

There are other evidences in Los Angeles of the village spirit. There is her large and inextinguishable army of quidnuncs. Everyone is interested in everyone else. Snooping is the popular pastime, gossiping the popular practice. Privacy is impossible. One may not eat in seclusion: the private dining room—that iniquitous den, that abode of brazen Camilles—is prohibited by law. One may not drink in private: every saloon keeper is compelled to make his front door of plate glass, the object being, no doubt, to shame the lushier into abstinence. One may not make love in private: the public parks and beaches are patrolled and arclighted. One may not even pay a visit in private—provided one's hostess lives in an apartment; for it is illegal for a man and woman (unless married) to be alone in an apartment, no matter where that apartment, under what circumstances or at what time of day it may be occupied. Do not imagine these incredible mandates are abrogated blue laws, composed years ago in an excess of religious emotionalism. Not at all. They are of recent instigation and are enforced daily by an alert police department. Thus is the fair virtue of Los Angeles sustained. Thus do the fantastic moralities of a less civilized day live on and triumph in Southern California.

This village democracy naturally invades the social life of Los Angeles. It was a city of over-night fortunes, of breathless boundings, of mushroom education. Scarcely were the suds dry upon her arms before they were penetrating the recesses of an evening gown. Yesterday the washtub, today the Welte-Mignon; yesterday the overalls and the

medicated underwear, today the braided broadcloth and the linen mesh. All this is not without its charm. To the stranger it is fascinating, as the skeleton of a diplodocus is fascinating. At first he stands aloof, but snobbery is a difficult game in Los Angeles. Furthermore, it is a futile one. The subtleties of class distinction do not fret or impress the native. And the stranger is soon weaned from his disdain. Once he has attended a reception and there met a tailor, the owner of a barber shop, a brace of actors, a piano tuner, a palmist and Emma Goldman, the democratic idea begins to get under his hide, and he finds himself at length contentedly boiling in the social melting pot.

Los Angeles is a city in a process of maturing. Its present condition is a temporary one. It possesses all the qualities of budding youth, outgrowing its clothes and endeavoring to swagger. This is evidenced particularly in its culture. Culture in Los Angeles is not indigenous, but rather an elaborate transmutation. At present it is being sedulously and ostentatiously acquired. There are clubs to cover all branches and eras of the arts. The streptococci of learning have invaded the city's social system, and its list of mental improvement organizations defies tabulation. Among them are Shakespeare clubs, Browning clubs, Brahms clubs, Ibsen clubs, dramatic, literary, ethical and hygienic societies of all descriptions. The arms of Los Angeles go snaking round the neck of every second, third and tenth rate author, musician or rabble-rouser who enters the gates. A Little Theater is on the way. There is a drama league; and Brieux, Wedekind, Schnitzler, Strindberg, Ibsen, Havelock Ellis and Nietzsche have long since been gulped and stomached.

There is something admirably Spartanlike in this feverish charge upon erudition, this impassioned grappling with esthetics. To be sure, much of the activity is spurious, the result of social impact, the natural desire to get aboard; but it at least has had the virtue of stirring things up. Women in Los Angeles have ceased to be marionettes, mere sedentary females dependent for their livelihood upon graft. They are the leaders of most of the "movements." They vote, storm the curbstone tables to sign petitions of protest against immoral trafficking, attend citizens' meetings, lecture on proposed ordinances and organize political clubs. Many of them hold public offices. Their pictures appear in the daily papers, labeled "leading citizens." Their support is sought by politicians. They bristle with genuine importance. They are a public factor to be reckoned with. Docility is not one of their virtues.

Nor are politics and public improvement their only forte. In the literary, artistic and dramatic movements they are the arbiters: the local Sanhedrins of learning are ninety-nine percent feminine. And even if they do think Browning the greatest Victorian, Ibsen a tractarian for women's votes, Nietzsche a crazy misogynist and Charles Rann Kennedy a great dramatist, they are to be indulged; for they are passing through that necessary stage in the quest for culture which inevitably precedes all genuine knowledge. Here again we get a whiff of the spirit of Los Angeles—the aggressive cologne of a village trying to improve itself.

It is inevitable that Los Angeles should offer rare and glowing opportunities for faddists and mountebanks—spiritualists, mediums, astrologists, phrenologists, palmists and all other breeds of esoteric windjammers. The city is cursed with an incredible number of these cabalistic scaramouches. Whole buildings are devoted to occult and outlandish orders—mazdaznan clubs, yogi sects, homes of truth, cults of cosmic fluidists, astral planers, Emmanuel movers, Rosicrucians and other boozy transcendentalists. These empirics do a thriving and luxurious business. They fill the papers with mystic balderdash. They parade the streets in plush kimonos. They hold "classes" and "circles," and wax fat on the donations of the inflammatory. No other city in the United States possesses so large a number of metaphysical charlatans in proportion to its population. The doctrines of these buddhas appeal to the adolescent intelligence. By the recital of platitudes couched in interstellar terminology, they dangle the tinsel star of erudition before the eyes of the semi-educated. Their symbolological teachings represent a short cut to knowledge, a means of attaining infinite wisdom without the necessity of hard study. These doctrines are ingeniously salted with altruistic formulas, thereby offering a soothing substitute for Methodist theology. The Los Angeles mind had been enchanted by this East Indian wind music, and exudes large globules of psychic perspiration in its undaunted and heroic assault upon culture.

But all this flirting with auras is merely one of the dangerous and expensive bits of pioneering through which the rustic intelligence must pass in ascending the ladder of cosmopolitanism. And it is also indicative of the extravagances of youthful cognition that Los Angeles supports a vast army of neuropaths, chiropractics, hydropaths, electrotherapists, mental healers, osteopaths and other romantic scientists. The scoundrelly allopaths—those plotters against human happiness

and health—have uphill work in the community. When they attempted to institute a tuberculin test for cattle they were defeated nearly two to one by the "medical freedomists." When the city board of health attempted to put down a recent epidemic of anterior poliomyelitis, again the loud cackling of the psychotherapists and their allied lodges thwarted simple quarantine measures. Vaccination in Los Angeles is looked upon as a murderous graft. And any allopathic attempt at germicide is regarded as a form of fanatical hysteria. The village mind, suspicious of genuine intelligence, is immured in that brummagem sophistication which makes it wary of serums and toxins merely because the pathogenic *spirilla* are invisible to the naked eye. Even an ordinance to muzzle dogs during the hot weather (passed after several authentic cases of rabies) was greeted with petitions from "humanitarians," automobile parades of protestation and public indignation meetings, and was finally set aside. Mind, in Los Angeles, is considered far more efficacious than therapeutics, and the germ theory is scouted as the maniacal raving of matriculated butchers.

But what of the stomach—that important and underrated organ? What has Los Angeles to offer in the line of physical well-being? Alas! The spirit of provincialism is nowhere better shown than in the city's restaurants and cafés. These eating places are little more than magnified village lunch rooms. The most popular ones are those which serve the largest portions. The gastronomic ideals are simplicity and quantity. Cooking in Los Angeles has none of the essentials of an art. There is no delicacy, no desire to please the eye, no imaginative combinations, no rare and savory dishes copied from the aristological lore of European kitchens. No item of the bill of fare will cause an Iowan to hesitate and ponder as to its meaning. The *pièce* is stated in lucid terms—"beef stew," "sweetbreads," "calf's liver," and the like. These prosaic and eminently understandable utterances are occasionally followed by outlandish *aus* and *à las*, but these addenda rarely affect the fundamental nature of the dish. You may seek in vain for artistry, for esthetics, for delicacies, for subtleties, for nuances of victualage. The atrocity of the cooked food in one restaurant is only surpassed by the offering of the one down the street. The hedonistic tourist, the occasional Brillât-Savarin, the transient Sala or Vittelius, compromises with the prosaic beefsteak, and hurries on to other cities.

The reason why Los Angeles is devoid of good cooking is due, first, to the character of its inhabitants, and, second, to its lack of any

gastronomic heritage. Her provincial taste in foods is like her provincial taste in morals and dress—crude, complacent, unimaginative. Eating and dressing, to the habitual moralist, are physical necessities; and when these necessities begin to ascend into the realms of art, they become indulgence, if not downright indecencies. Fancy and elaborate dishes offend the prude in the same pathopsychological manner that fancy and elaborate dresses offend him. They have a tendency of turning his thoughts from the good, the true and the beautiful to the carnal, the lewd and the earthy. The flesh cannot be mortified with Béarnaise sauce, seductively prepared truffles, and *coupes St. Jaques*. To eat gloriously and riotously is to make a god of one's belly; and the Wisconsin god has no stomach. The average resident of Los Angeles has an ingrained suspicion of ornamental and extravagant cooking. He prefers the good old dishes and the homely nomenclature. Nor is he sufficiently rakish to order an entrée with which he is unfamiliar. With him, a gastronomic adventure is in the same category as an amorous adventure. His puritanical phagocytes become automatically active the moment a gipsy thought enters his head. Hence the simplicity of the Los Angeles bill of fare, its innocence of any exotic *compote* or *vol-au-vent*. The almost bucolic diet forced upon the restaurateur in Los Angeles could be borne were the cooking of superior quality; but here again a noble craft is discouraged by lack of appreciation. It had been found by the café owners that poorly prepared meals are as popular as the combinations of experts; and consequently there are few places in the city where one may obtain meritoriously cooked food.

Los Angeles, however, is not a city whose organisms demand an interesting or even competent café life. Such restaurants as she possesses and such cafés as she tolerates are mere concessions to the immoral tourist who has not yet been ravished by the bacilli of domesticity. With the possible exception of Boston, Philadelphia and Baltimore, Los Angeles is the dullest city in the United States from the standpoint of the pleasure-seeking stranger, the out-of-town visitor and the traveling salesman. The spirit of genuine gaiety is lacking. Enjoyment is considered the first step to perdition. Noise is the rumbling of the gates of hell. Music is the sign of immorality, and dancing is indecent. This is largely the attitude of Los Angeles, and committees are continually being formed to discourage each and all of these licentious manifestations. It is small wonder that Los Angeles enjoys the reputation of being the most puritanical and stupidly governed

city of the first class in America—a city of little sociability or hospitality, a city devoid of lenience and cosmopolitanism.

The trouble lies in the fact that the people of Los Angeles stay too much at home. In the Middle West, entertainment was rare, and the hearthstone habit became fixed. So the transplanted resident hurries home to his open fireplace and his built-in bookcases, or calls on his neighbors. He possesses a virgin innocence of the theory that there is any other life permissible to respectable and pious persons. He views the café as a place where one goes with chorus girls or other people's wives, a rendezvous for the white slavers. Therefore, he has no desire to go to a café after the theater to hear good music and meet friends. Such a proceeding would be to flirt with sin, to set an immoral example for his children. No Babylonish merrymaking for him! No encouragement of youthful skylarking! No leg-shaking and immodest cabarets! "To hum," quickly and virtuously! St. Louis, Chicago, New Orleans, San Francisco, New York—these cities are not without their café life, their carnival spirit, their jollity, their youthful pleasantries. They are hospitable, in the broad sense, because they offer a good time to the stranger; and they are able to give the good time because their inhabitants have gaiety in their blood. They have not been anesthetized with a monastic morality. They do not suffer from a pathological fear of joy. They have not succumbed to the prim doctrine that pleasure is vice, and that the natural instincts are obscene. But such is the doctrine of Los Angeles—a city where virtue has become virulent.

Is the real Los Angeleño a pietist, a killjoy, a lawn sprinkler, a lover of rhubarb, a toreador of virtue? Are there no other citizens—no genuine human beings, no honest rascals, no Philippe Bridaus, no Lilly Czepaneks, no Colonel Newcomes? Has the city indeed no urbanity, no culture? To be sure—to be sure. But what I am trying to do is to limn and transmit the personality of the town, to catch its dominant chord at this particular period of transition, to set forth its consuming ideal, to paint it impressionistically as it strikes the visitor today. Los Angeles stands in the unique position of having no representative citizens, no permanent quality of hospitality. Its personality today is not that of yesterday; and tomorrow may issue in an entirely different aspect of genius. At present it epitomizes no stable qualities. It is almost entirely without individuality. There are no traditions to mould its temperament. There is no foundation of culture, religion, habits or tenets. Its history ceased in 1847. At that time a new era began. The

Spanish civilization breathed its last, and its influence, too, passed out with the desecration of the Franciscan missions. Only the upholstered Spanish names remain to remind us that Los Angeles indeed has a past. The Americano brought with him his own clothes, foods, habits and liquors. He built on the ruins of Spain, but he might as well have built on a virgin desert for all the effect those ruins had upon him. And today the average citizen of Los Angeles, far from being influenced by a Spanish heritage, knows nothing of California's history prior to 1890, and more than likely is unable to pronounce the name of his own street. Scratch a native and you'll find an Iowan.

But, as I have said, there are other inhabitants besides the Middle Westerner. Considered technically and logically, the real citizens are found in those fine old Spanish families which survived the wreck of Spanish rule in California. These families are rare, however. They preserve the social aloofness of an elder day. They never raise their voice in political affairs. Sundays they are found at mass in the Cathedral on Main Street. In the afternoon they drive in the parks. They are glimpsed at the Opera, but rarely at the theaters. They cling to the faiths and customs of their forefathers. They are genuinely hospitable; they possess a degree of Continental culture; and once you have gained admittance to their homes, they lavish on you the whole-hearted courtesies characteristic of the Latin. These, then, may be claimed the true Los Angelesños; but this type the aristocratic Spaniard, with his zealous loyalty to his racial traditions, is rapidly passing. Today barely a score of such families remain in Los Angeles.

On the other hand, the city numbers among its inhabitants a large number of civilized and well-to-do Easterners. These people are conversant with the works of Henry James. They eat their soup silently. They prefer Debussy to the music of George M. Cohan. They do not sign petitions to prohibit productions of "Sapho." The books in their libraries are cut. They do not roar at the strains of "Dixie." And during the opera season they attend "Manon" and "Herodiade" in preference to "Il Trovatore" and "Rigoletto." They have been wooed to Los Angeles by the semi-tropical climate and have built their homes in the suburbs. There is a large number of such citizens. For the most part they are middle-aged, retired from active business life, and have gone West to find a mild and mellow climate in which to spend their declining years.

To these people alone is due the fact that Los Angeles has a long

opera season; that it supports two symphony orchestras; that the local artists—a very talented body of men and women—are able to do serious work and find a market for their wares. They make it possible for at least one restaurant in Los Angeles to cook its food properly. To them is due the bookings of the better class attractions at the local theaters. And they have made Los Angeles nationally famous as a discriminating book-buying center. But only in such ways do they influence the community. They are unable to defeat the asinine ordinances which the pious city fathers are forever imposing upon the inhabitants, and the spirit of the town is little altered by their activities. The very nature of these people makes them shrink from the cheap publicity which is necessary to combat the riotous debauches of Puritanism through which the city is continually passing. Their influence is necessarily a subterranean one, but in this intelligent minority lies the hope of the city's cosmopolitan growth.

And yet—after the worst has been said, much remains which is deserving of praise. Wherein lies the fascination of the Angel City! Why has it become the Mecca of tourists the world over? Is it because it is the best advertised city in the United States? Is it that it offers illimitable opportunities for making money and eating fruit? Hardly that. After all the pamphlets of the real estate agents, the boosters' clubs, the Board of Trade and the Chamber of Commerce have been read, something remains unspoken—something that uncannily grips the stranger. Despite its suburban pieties, its vice crusades, its domestic ideals, its incessant gossiping, its moral anesthesia, its Oriental religions, its Cagliostros, its leaden midnights, its poor cooking, its garish newness, its lack of hospitality, its tawdry culture, its cruel Sundays and its Iowan traditions—notwithstanding all these handicaps, there is something essentially inspiring in the life of the city. Los Angeles is a modern Ephesus, and as such is a challenge to the virile blood of the nation. Great problems are being worked out there. The city reeks with promise. Life in Los Angeles is real and earnest. There is a continual clash of wit—not the wit of epigram and culture, but the wit of serious endeavor. It is a city of crudities, of experimentation, of reinforced concrete, of gaudy colors, of real estate transactions. It represents the pioneering stage in both commerce and art. It possesses much of the bumptious assurance of the youth suddenly burdened with responsibilities. Its future is not a bustle; all eyes are fixed on tomorrow morning's sunrise. At present it is more heterogeneous than any other

city in America. Its hypocrisies are matched by subcutaneous audacities which shock even the hardened policemen. At present it is far more emotional than logical. The god of Los Angeles is a combination of Calvin and Anthony Comstock—with Comstock predominating.

I am tempted to predict the future of Los Angeles; but such is not my mission in this article. But in so far as the personality of the Los Angeles of today indicates the Los Angeles of tomorrow—just as the youth suggests the man—so may I surmise that which the coming years have in store. This looking forward is inevitable when one considers the character of the city. And so, considering it in its present embryonic condition, one sees a vision of a great metropolis, founded on solid stock—a metropolis wealthy and diverse, commercially powerful and artistically wise.

AFTERWARDS

by Charles Hanson Towne

Oh, to think that the world will go on
After we are dead!
Lovers will go on loving,
The old, old words will be said.

New buds will bloom in April,
And white be the apple-bough;
June will return, the birds troop back,
The earth be as glad as now.

The long, green pageant of Summer
Will march its accustomed way,
And year after year the Autumn pomp
Will crimson the pallid day.

Lovers will go on loving,
The words that we said will be said,
When you and I are forgotten,
When you and I are dead!

A SHEPHERDESS OF FAUNS

by F. Tennyson Jesse

ARCHIE LETHBRIDGE arrived in Provence thoroughly satisfied with life in general and himself in particular. He had just sold a big picture; was contemplating, with every prospect of success, giving a "one-man show" in Boston of the work he would do in Provence—and the girl he loved had accepted the offer of his hand and heart.

Miss Gwendolen Gould was eminently eligible. Her income, though comfortable, was not large enough to brand her husband as a fortune hunter; she was pretty in a well-bred way that satisfied the eye without causing it to turn and gaze after her; and, above all, she could be relied upon never to do, say or think an unusual thing. Like all painters, when they are conventionally minded, Archie was the pink of propriety—he owned to enough wild oats of his own sowing to save him from inferiority in the society of his fellow men, and he held exceedingly rigid views on the subject of his womenkind. Gwendolen might—doubtless had, for she was one of the large army of young women brought up to no profession save that of sex—give this or that man a kiss at a dance, but she would never have saved all of the passion and possibilities for one man, and lavished them on him, regardless of suitable circumstances. Archie's name (that he hoped one day to adorn with some coveted letters at which he now pretended to sneer) would be perfectly safe in Gwendolen's carefully manicured hands.

The only drawback to his complete content was that his fair, sleek person showed signs of getting a trifle too plump—for he was only young as a man who is nearly "arrived" counts youth. On the whole, however, it was with a feeling of settled attainment that Archie arrived at Nice and proceeded to strike up into the Alpes Maritimes, totally unprepared for any bizarre or inexplicable events—he would have laughed satirically at the bare idea.

To do him justice, he worked hard, and he had a tremendous facility and a certain charm that concealed his lack of true artistic sensitiveness. He painted here and there from Grasse to Le Broc, and then one day, feeling he had taken all he could from the soft-scented land of olives and flowers, he hired a motor to convey him up into the Back o' Beyond and drop him there.

After that he saw no living thing, neither bird nor beast nor human,

for many miles: only rounded hills, opening out from each other in endless succession and covered with harsh yellow grass and strewn with gray boulders; deep gullies that at one time had been set alight and now were scorched and brown like plague pits, with here and there a patch of pale stones showing up lividly from the charred thorns and blackened soil. Archie shivered, partly because of the keen wind blowing down from the great plateau beyond the hills, partly because something savage in the scene gripped at him.

The car throbbed on higher and higher, till the road, winding acutely along the edge of precipices, developed a surface that caused his chauffeur to swear gently to himself. Valley after valley opened out, long and narrow, and Archie noticed signs of a long-past cultivation in the curved terraces into which the bed of each valley was cut, and forming an endless series of semicircles. There was no trace of any crops, and the whole effect was of some rude amphitheater where Neolithic man sat round and watched gladiatorial shows.

The car, sticking now and then in a rut, or jolting violently over stones, finally crested the last rise, and Archie found himself on a vast stretch of land ringed in by sharp-edged hills, like some dead, gigantic crater; to the right, far away on a slope of the mountain ring, lay a gray straggling town that seemed hacked out of the hardened laval. The only sign of life was in a patch of vividly green grass near at hand, where hundreds of crocuses had burned their way up through the earth and showed like a bed of thin blue flames.

Archie directed the contemptuous chauffeur toward the town, and they finally drew up at the inn—a little, green-shuttered affair, with a stone-flagged passage, and a tortoise shell cat drowsing beside the door. Outside a *buvette* opposite was a marble-topped table at which sat a couple of workmen drinking cider. An evanescent gleam of sun shone out, and the tawny liquid caught and held it, making each glass throw onto the table a bubble of gold fire enmeshed in the delicate shadow of the vessel itself. Archie stood transfixed for a moment with pleasure; then, as the gleam faded and died, he entered the inn.

Like most people with the creative temperament, Archie Lethbridge was the prey of environment. Draginoules took such a deep, sure grip on Archie that it did more than merely affect his work—it began to upset his neatly arranged values and to substitute fresh ones in their place. Draginoules, in short, behaved like a master of scenic effects, it allowed a couple of days for the background to permeate Archie's

consciousness, and, when he was ripe for it, introduced the human element, which, to a man, must of necessity mean a woman.

It was one morning, when he was washing brushes in the dim inn kitchen, that he saw her first. She came out of the *buvette* to serve some workmen, and Archie stopped dead in the act of swirling a cobalt-laden brush round and round in the hollowed yellow soap he held. He always saw the whole scene in memory as clearly as he saw it then: the low-fronted *buvette*, the glass of the door refracting the light as it still quivered from her passage; the pools of blue shadow that lay under the table and chairs on the pavement; the blouse-clad figures of the workmen, particularly a young man with a deeply burnt back to his neck; and the girl herself, holding aloft a tray of liqueur glasses, that winked like little eyes. All this he saw framed by the darkness of the kitchen and cut sharply into squares by the black bars of the window; then, as he mechanically went on frothing blue-stained bubbles out of the soap, he said to himself: "I must paint that girl."

He found that she was the niece of the stout couple who kept the place, and her name was Désirée Prevost. As they mentioned her, most people shrugged their shoulders. Oh, no, there was nothing against the girl—and though it was true her eyebrows met in a thick bar across her nose, and old people had always said that was a sign of the *loup-garou*, enlightened moderns did not really hold by that. The town was proud of her looks, for it considered her "*très bien*," the highest expression of praise from a Provençal, who is a dour kind of person.

Archie approached the aunt of Désirée on the subject of sittings with some trepidation, but met with an agreeable pliancy from her and a calm, though indifferent assent from Désirée herself. She had a high opinion of her own value, and no amount of appreciation surprised her.

Scanning her afresh as they stood on the pavement making final arrangements, Archie inwardly congratulated himself. From the heavy brass-colored hair massed with a sculptured effect round her well poised head to the firmly planted feet, admirably proportioned to the rest of her, she was entirely right for his purpose—she seemed the spirit of Draginoules incarnate. Owing to the opaque pallor of her skin, her level bar of fair eyebrow and heavily folded lids, big, finely modeled nose and faintly tinted mouth, all took on a sculptured quality that made for repose; the very shadows of her face were delicate in tone, mere breaths of shadows. Yet she was excessively vital, but it was a smoldering, restrained vitality suggestive of a quiescent crater. Her

face was too individual to be perfect—the nose a trifle too big, the brow a shade too narrow for the full modeling across the cheek bones; but she had an egglike curve from turn of jaw to pointed chin. When she laughed her teeth showed large and strong, and her throat was the loveliest Archie had ever seen—magnificently big—and she had a trick of tilting her head back that made the smoothly knitted muscles of her neck swell a little under the white skin. As he painted her Archie used to find himself racking his brains for some speech that would make her head take that upward poise, so that he could watch the play of throat.

He chose his background well: a sheltered spot in a fold of hill just beyond the town, where a slim young oak sapling still retained its copper-hued autumn leaves, that seemed almost fiery against the deep, soft blue of the sky. He had conceived of her as standing under the oak tree, so that, to him, working lower down on the slope, she, too, showed against the sky, seemingly caught in a network of delicate boughs. Being below her, he was also the richer by the soft, three-cornered shadow under her chin, and the whole of her became a tone of exquisite delicacy, as of shadowed ivory, in the setting of sky—that sky of Southern spring which seems literally drenched in light. The tawny note of the oak leaves was to be repeated in some sheep, which, though kept subservient to the figure of Désirée, were to supply the motive of the picture—or so Archie thought till the sudden freak that made him introduce the fauns.

Désirée was all for robing herself in her best—a black silk bodice with a high collar, and a betrained, jet-spangled skirt, but Archie coaxed her into wearing the dress he first saw her in: a mere wrapper of indefinite prune color, belted in at the waist to show the lines of her deep-chested, long-flanked figure, and cut so low as to leave her throat bare from the pit of it. Her sleeves were rolled back to the elbow and her arms showed milk white as far as the reddened wrists and the big work-roughened hands that held a hazel switch across her thighs.

Archie was Anglo-Saxon enough to feel a slight stiffness at the first sitting, but Désirée was a stranger to the sensation of tied tongue.

"I like the Americans," she announced. "Not many of them come here, but I have not spent my life in Draginoules, no, indeed! I was in a laundry once at La Madeleine. Do you know it? It is where they take in the washing of Nice. So I used to go much into Nice, and an English lady there painted me. She had a talent! She made me look beautiful.

In Draginoules, do you know what they call me? They call me '*l'Américaine manquée*.' "

"Because you like them so?" asked Archie.

"Because I have the nature, the habits of an American woman. Oh, I assure you! I like to live out of doors—to be out all day with one's bread and a bottle of wine, and sleep on the hillside—that is what I call living. I always open my window at night, though my aunt says it is a folly. I could go to England if I chose, as a maid. My English lady would have me. Ah, how I long to see England! One gets so tired of Draginoules."

"But your friends—you would be sorry to leave them?"

"Oh, for that, I do not care about the people of Draginoules. It was my mother's place, not mine. I was born in Lyons, where my father was a silk weaver. But he was a bad kind of man, so I came to my aunt to live. I do not think much of the people of Draginoules. They all like me, but I do not like them!"

"Why don't you go to England, then? Though I think you are far better here!" quoth Archie, on whom the glamour of the place was strong.

"My fiancé would kill himself," said Désirée serenely.

"Oh—you are *fiancée*?" murmured Archie, wondering why he felt that absurd mingling of relief and regret.

"To a mechanic in Nice. We are to marry when he gets a rise. *Hélas, je ne serai plus fille!*"

Her words, so simply and directly spoken, caught at Archie's imagination.

"What a *vierge farouche*!" he said to himself. "If I can get that feeling into my picture!" Aloud he said: "And your fiancé—he is very devoted, then?"

"He adores me. It is a perfect folly, see you, to feel for anyone what he does for me. He is mad about me."

Archie returned to the theme next time she posed for him.

"So you think a man can care too much for a woman?" he asked, and stopped for a moment with raised brush to watch her answer. She shrugged her shoulders.

"As to that, I think women are worth it. But it is foolish to care everything for one person."

"You could care for others, then—as well as M. Colombini?" asked Archie, with a sudden stir at his pulses.

"If One can care a little—here and there. But commit a folly for a man, that is a thing I would never do. And I am very fond of Auguste. If I did not think we should be happy and faithful I should not marry him. I look round on all the married people I know, and see nothing but betrayal everywhere. Here a husband plays his wife false; there she in turn cheats him. Bah—it is not good, that!"

"How right you are," said Archie virtuously. "But you do not then think it necessary to care as much for Auguste as he cares for you?"

"*Dame*, no! How should I? He pleases me, and he is good—I can respect him. And I like him to kiss me. . . ." The most charming look of self-consciousness mingled with reminiscence flitted over her face. "But for him—he is mad when he kisses me. Women do not care like that. It is a folly. And it is always happier, monsieur, when it is the husband who cares the most. That is how men are made."

Oh, yes, thought Archie, she was woman, after all, this *vierge farouche*, and more unashamedly woman, franker in her admissions of knowledge—for she admitted in her expressive face and gestures more than she actually said—than any woman of his world. He worked in silence for a while, then told her to rest.

She flung herself on the turf with an abandonment of limb and muscle usually only seen in young animals, and he came and lay a little below her, and lit a cigarette. Désirée lay serenely, her face upturned, and he studied her thoughtfully.

"Surely very few of your country-women are as blonde as you," he said. "Your eyes are blue, and your brows and lashes a faint brown, and your hair is—"

He paused, at a loss how to describe her hair. It was not golden—rather that strong brass color that, had he seen it on a sophisticated townswoman, he would have dubbed "peroxide." It was oddly metallic hair, not only in its color but in the carven ripples of it where she wore it pulled across her low brow and massed in heavy braids round her head. That way of wearing her hair right down to her brows, except for a narrow white triangle of forehead showing, boylike, at one side, gave her an oddly animal look—using the word in its best sense. A look as of some low-browed, heavy-tressed faun, fearless and unashamed—it was only in her eyes that mystery lay.

"My hair?" she exclaimed, showing her big white teeth in a laugh as rank as a boy's. "But that, you know, is not natural. It was an accident."

"An accident! How on earth—"

"Why, I was doing the *ménage* for a chemist and his wife over the border, at Vintimile. And she had her hair like this. One day she gave me a little bottle and said: 'Désirée, you're a good girl, but you don't know how to make the best of yourself. Put some of this on your head.' I rubbed some on one side only, just to see what would happen, and next day I found one-half of my head golden—golden like the sun. 'Mon Dieu,' I said, 'but what do I look like, one-half yellow and one-half brown?' So I poured it on all over. It is nothing now, because I have not put on the stuff for so long; but at one time it was beautiful. Such hair! Below my waist, and gold, oh, such a gold! Now, it wants doing again."

She ducked her head down for him to see the crown of it, and he perceived from the parting outward two inches of unabashed dark hair—almost blue it looked by contrast with the circling wrappings of yellow. Archie, immensely tickled at finding such a splendid young savage in the Back o' Beyond with dyed hair, could but shout with mirth. Désirée, totally unoffended, joining in; and when he went back that evening he felt he knew her far better than on the preceding day.

The next day he unconsciously took up their conversation of the day before. They were resting again, for he said it was too hot to work; and the sunset effect he wanted was growing later every day.

"So you could care a little for someone else before you marry Auguste?" he suggested, lightly enough, and looking away from her to the snow mountains that bared white fangs in the blue of the sky.

She laughed a little, stretched herself, drooped her lids, was in a flash and for a flash entirely woman—alluring, withdrawing, sure of herself. As she gained in poise Archie felt his own tenure of self-control slipping away from him.

"Could you?" he persisted, his eyes by now back on her changing face.

"How does one care? What is it?" she evaded. "I do not think *you* would be able to tell me. You are so cold, so English; you would care just as much as would be pleasant, and never enough to make you uncomfortable."

The penetration of this remark displeased Archie.

"But you are like that yourself," he objected "You are the most cool, calculating girl I ever met—everything you say shows it."

She rolled over slightly on the grass, so that her head, the chin thrust

forward on her cupped hands, was brought nearer to him but kept at the provocative three-quarter angle suggestive of withdrawal. Her thick, heavy lids were drooped, but suddenly they flickered, and half rose to show a gleam so wild, so unlike anything he had ever seen in her, that Archie caught his breath. It was as though some alien spirit, a pagan, woodland thing, was looking at him through the eyes of the self-possessed, level-headed young woman, who at times even seemed more *bourgeoise* than peasant.

"*Désirée!* How beautiful you are!" he cried.

"As beautiful as *mademoiselle* your fiancée?" asked *Désirée*.

With a run Archie descended into the commonplace, and *Désirée* became for him nothing but a pretty girl who went rather too far.

"Americans do not care to discuss the ladies of their choice," he said grandiloquently. "May I ask how you knew I was *fiancé*?"

"I have seen her picture in your room," said *Désirée* frankly; "the *patronne* told me there was one there. She is pretty—very pretty. Her hair is so beautifully done in all those little rolls, one would say it must be false. She is altogether *mignonne*—one would say the head of a doll!"

Désirée was absolutely sincere in thinking she was giving Miss Gwendolen Gould the highest praise possible. She would willingly have exchanged her splendid muscular body for the slim, correctly corseted form of Miss Gould, and have bartered her strongly modeled head for the small, regular features and marcel-waved hair of the other girl. It was only his perception of this that kept Archie from anger, and as it was the truth of the praise hit him sharply. That night he sat down before the miniature and conscientiously tried to conjure up the emotions of a lover. The experiment was a failure.

When he came to go to bed he found a sprig of myrtle lying on his pillow.

"How did that get here, I wonder?" he asked himself, and then stooped, with an exclamation of disgust. A corner of the turned-back sheet that trailed on the floor was lightly powdered with earth as though a muddy shoe had stood on it. The footprint—if footprint it were—was oddly impossible in shape, short and rounded, more like the mark of a hoof.

"Can the *patronne's* goat have got up here? I saw it wandering in the passage today," thought Archie vexedly. "Beastly animal to drop half-chewed green food all over my pillow!"

The injured man thumped his pillow and turned it over, so that the despised myrtle sprig lay crushed beneath it. Then he went to bed and to sleep.

"I dreamt of you all night, Désirée," he told her next day, "and I feel as tired as though it had all been real."

"We are polite today!" laughed Désirée.

"Wait till you hear. I was pursuing you round rocks and over streams and through undergrowth all night long. You were you, and yet you weren't. Somehow I got the impression that it was you as you would have been hundreds and thousands of years ago. And I kept on losing you, and then little satyrs beckoned at me to show me the way you'd gone, and I stumbled on after hoofs that were always flashing up just ahead—just vanishing round corners."

"Satyrs?" What are they?" asked Désirée.

Archie explained as picturesquely as possible, but was brought to a stop by a curious change in Désirée's eyes. They wore the strained, misty look of the person who is trying hard to catch at some long-lost memory. Again he was startled by that strange feeling that something else was looking from between those placid lids of hers.

"But I know!" she began. "Those creatures you are telling me—*what* is it I know about them?" She broke off and shook herself impatiently. "Bah! It is gone. And then what happened—did you find me at the end?"

"I can't quite remember," said Archie slowly. "Something happened, but what it was is all blurred. I believe you're a wood nymph, Désirée—a wood nymph whose father was a satyr—and he chased and caught your mother and took her down through his tangle of underbrush with his hands in her hair, never heeding her screams. You have very definite little points at the top of your ears, you know. We all have them a bit to remind us of our wild dog days, but yours are the most pronounced I've ever seen. Do you never take off all your clothes and go creeping and slipping through the woods at night, to bathe in one of the crater pools by the light of the moon?"

"How did you know?" She turned wide, startled eyes on him; her quickened breath fluttered her gown distressfully.

"What! You do it then?" exclaimed Archie.

"No, no! What folly are you talking?" She sprang to her feet and slipped behind the oak sapling, as though it were a defence against some danger; across the boughs he saw her puzzled, fearful eyes. As he

watched her, the expression of alarm faded—she put up her hand to her hair, gave it a quieting pat and tucked some stray strands into place, then she looked across at the easel.

"It must be time to work again!" she exclaimed. "Have we been resting long, m'sieu? I feel as though I'd been asleep and you'd just awakened me." She yawned as she spoke, stretching her strong arms in a slow, wide circle, the muscles of her shoulders rounding forward and making two little hollows appear above her collarbones. The sight aroused the artist in Archie, and he, too, scrambled up, and betook himself to work. The sheep, that he had bribed the shepherd to pasture there, happened to come as he wanted them that evening, and he began to work away in silence. One of the goats, a piebald, shaggy creature, reared itself up on its hind legs, with its forefeet against the tree trunk, and began to nibble at the foliage. Something about the pose of the creature sent a swift suggestion to Archie's mind, and he just had time to rough in the legs, with their slight outward tilt, the hoofs set firmly apart and the tail sticking out and up from the sharply curved-in rump, before the animal dropped on all fours and moved away. Archie, with the smile of the creator in his eyes, worked on, and the goat's legs merged into the beginnings of a slim human body with the hands leaning against the tree and the head, tilted on one side, peering round at the figure of Désirée. Suddenly he gave an exclamation of annoyance. "What is the matter?" asked Désirée.

"There is someone watching us from those myrtle bushes. Confound the beggar—someone from the village, I suppose!"

Désirée turned sharply, just in time to see a brown face grinning through the leaves. It was a face compact of curiously slanting lines—upward-twitched tufts of brows, upward wrinkles at the corners of the narrow eyes, and a slanting mouth that laughed above a pointed, thrusting chin.

"That! That is only my little brother, m'sieu. It is one of God's innocents, and lame on both feet. Sylvestre! Come out and speak to m'sieu—no one will hurt you."

The bushes rustled and parted, and an odd little figure, apparently that of a boy of about ten, came scrambling out with a queer, lunging action from the hips. The child's legs were deformed, but he swung himself forward at a marvelous speed on a pair of clumsy crutches. Archie saw that when he was not laughing his brown eyes were wide and grave, with a look of innocence in them that contrasted oddly with the knowing gleam they showed a minute earlier.

"But he is exactly what I want for the picture!" cried Archie, running his hand through the boy's tangled curls and tilting his face gently backward. "He is exactly like the things I was telling you of. He must sit to me."

He deftly tugged the boy's shirt out of his belt and peeled it off him, exposing a thin little brown body with a skin as fine as a girl's. When he felt the sun on his bare flesh the child made guttural sounds of delight, flinging himself backward on the ground, and, supported by his hands, letting his head tip back till his curls touched the grass. As the shielding locks fell away, Archie saw with a thrill that was almost repulsion that dark brown hair grew thickly out of the boy's ears.

"Would he stay still, do you think?" he asked Désirée.

"He will, if I tell him," replied Désirée. "Come to me, Sylvestre," and drawing the child to her, she stroked his head and whispered to him.

After the addition of Sylvestre the picture made great strides, even if the intimacy between Archie and Désirée advanced less rapidly than before. And yet every now and again, in sudden flashes of wildness, in a half-uttered phrase totally at variance with her normal self—little things that she seemed to remember from some forgotten whole, Désirée would give him that impression of being two people at once; and always, on these occasions, she was as puzzled as he, and with an added touch of something that seemed almost shame. For the everyday Désirée, that calm, practical and comely young woman, Archie's friendliness was touched by nothing warmer than the inevitable element of sex; but the shy, bold thing that sometimes peeped from between her lids, that thing that seemed to take possession of her beautiful body, and mock and allure and chill him in a breath, that thing was waking an answering spirit in himself, and he knew it.

Miss Gould's portrait was unable to protect him from wakeful nights, when he turned his pillow again and again to find a cool surface for his cheek—nights when he would at last fling off the bed-clothes and lean out of the window to watch the steel blue dawn turn to the light of everyday. He was living in a state of tension, and it seemed to him that some great event was holding its breath to spring, as though the very trees and rocks, the brooding sky and quiescent pools, were all in some conspiracy, hoodwinking yet preparing him for the moment of revelation.

It was onto the sensitive surface of this mood that a letter from Gwendolen, announcing her speedy arrival in Provence, dropped like a dart, tearing the delicate tissues and stinging the fibres to the necessity for haste. Gwendolen, aunt-dragoned, and Baedeker in hand, meant the return to the acceptance of the old values that had once filled him with complacency. And yet, with all the jarring sense of intrusion Gwendolen's advent instilled, mingled a feeling that was almost relief—as though he was being saved, against his will but with his judgment, from something too disturbing and beautiful to be quite comfortable.

Three or four days after receiving Gwendolen's letter, he put the last touches to the picture and informed Désirée he would need her no more. She received the news quite calmly, apparently without regret. Archie felt absurdly flat as he wrapped up his wet brushes in a week-old sheet of the *Petit Niçois*. He also felt very virtuous, and told himself it was not many men who would have refrained from making love to the girl under the circumstances.

There was a little hut, used for stacking wood, close to where he worked, and here, thanks to the courtesy of the owner, he was wont to put his picture for the night. Désirée, as usual, helped him to carry it in and plant the legs of the easel firmly into the earthen floor. He had worked late, and the sun had just slipped behind the far ridge of the mountains: the tiny hut was filled with a deepening half-light; the stacked brushwood seemed wine-colored in the warm shadow; here and there a peeled twig stood out luminously. By the open door hoofmarks in the trampled earth showed that the *patronne's* mule had been carrying away wood that morning. That was as palpable as the fact that it must have been Sylvestre's deformed foot which had soiled Archie's sheet, yet those marks recreated the atmosphere of his dream, and seemed, in the sudden confusion mounting to his brain at the warmth and nearness of Désirée, to mix madly with Sylvestre, and rustled undergrowth and the glimmer of elusive hoofs round myrtle bushes—and the glimmer of something whiter and more elusive still.

He could hear Désirée's breathing beside him—not as even as usual, but deeper-drawn and uncertain; and turning, he met the sidelong glance of her eyes.

"Désirée—you said you sometimes slipped out at night and played in the woods—and the pools. Take me out with you tonight and show me where you go and what you do. I'll be awfully good—I swear I will;

you're not a woman—you're a nymph, a strange, uncanny thing. I believe you meet your kinsfolk there and dance with them, Désirée!"

She looked at him for a moment in silence. In her eyes her normal and her unknown selves contended.

"It is true I often go out as you say; something drives me, but I do not know why myself. And I get very tired and can never remember clearly what it has been like. It is as though I did it almost in my sleep, or had dreamt it."

"It *is* a dream—everything's a dream, and I've got to wake up soon. Let's have this bit of dream together—Désirée!"

She yielded. They took bread and wine and apples for a midnight feast, and set off together over the lava fields to the woods that tufted the mountain slopes. Through the deep, soft light the pallor of her face and throat glimmered as through dark water. She held his hand to guide him over the fissures and round the piled boulders; once he slipped on a hummock of hard grass, and felt her grow rigid on the instant to check his fall. They were silent, until, seated at the edge of the woods, they ate their supper, and then they laughed softly together like children, with fragmentary speech; and once Désirée sang a snatch of a Provençal song, Archie, who knew his Mistral, joining in.

Presently, when they fell on silence again, it seemed the wood was full of noises—stealthy footfalls, snapping of dry twigs, the rustling of parted shrubs. As the late moon, almost at the full, swam up the sky, making the distant snowpeaks gleam like white flames against the dusky blue, and shimmering on the pools cupped here and there over the hollowed expanse below, Archie could have sworn that the penetrating light showed quick-glancing faces and bright eyes from the thicket. Once a great white owl did sail out with a beating of wings, so close to them that they could see the stiff brows that bristled over his lambent orbs; and once a strong smell and a gleam of black and white told of a wild-cat tracking her prey.

They buried the disfiguring remnants of their little feast, and then Archie solemnly poured out what was left of the red wine onto the slope below.

"For the gods!" he announced. "The liquor for us and the dregs for them!"

"Ah," cried Désirée, as though his action pricked sleeping memories to life, "now I remember it all again! I forget when I go home, but then the next time everything is clear again, and so it goes on."

She disappeared in a jutting spur of the wood, and Archie scrambled to his feet and followed her. As he broke through to the further edge, which hung over a wide pool, he caught his foot in something soft—*Désirée's* clothes that lay in a fairy circle, just as she had slipped out of them.

She stood at the pool's brim, her hands clasped at the back of her head, a thing to dream of. She was so lovely that all feeling died save a passionate appreciation, keen to the verge of pain; she was so lovely that of necessity she awoke an impersonal emotion. Slowly she stretched herself, and as the muscles rippled into curves and sank, the delicate shadows ebbed and breathed on the pearl white of her body. Archie's every nerve was strung not to lose one line or one breath of tone.

Putting out a foot, she touched the water, so that little tremors soft as feathers fled over the surface; then, as she waded in, deeper and deeper, the water parted from her in flakes of brightness that shook and mixed up and broke away. When she rose, dripping wet, the moonlight refracted off her was mirrored in the water, and thrown back again on her—a magic shuttle weaving an aura of whiteness. Long arrows of light fled back through the pool as she waded to shore, where she stood for a moment motionless; head slightly forward, arms hanging, and one hip thrown outward as she poised her weight. Myriads of tiny, crescent-shaped drops clung to her limbs like fish scales, so that she seemed more mermaiden than wood nymph; but Archie's eyes proclaimed her *Artemis*—she would have calmed a satyr as she stood. Thoughts of forest glades where chill, sweet sports were held, and the wildest hoof was tamed to the childlike kinship with nature that is pagan innocence, floated through his mind like visible things.

Suddenly she became conscious of his presence, and gave one glance in which invitation and a certain calm aloofness seemed to mingle. "*Désirée!*" stammered Archie. "*Désirée!*"

Excitement tingled through him, blurring his ideas, just as chloroform sets the blood pricking with thousands of points and edges, while dizzying the brain. She stood still a second longer; then, either the fearful nymph swayed her utterly, or, as it seemed to Archie, a sudden rejection of him, the clumsy, civilized mortal, sprang into her eyes. She flung up her head, turned and was gone in the tangle of the woods. Without more than a second's hesitation he plunged in after her.

To Archie, whenever he looked back, that night seemed an orgy of chase-gone-mad, gathering in force as it went and sweeping into its resistless flow the most incongruous of elements.

He ran after her, stumbling, tripping, whipped across the face by brambles. Everything in life was crystallized into the desire to catch up, to track her to the enchanted green where, with her, he could become part of a remote free life he had never imagined before. All his own personality, except that in him which was hers, had ceased to exist; work, Gwendolen, the great world and the inn at Draginoules were wiped out of knowledge by the force of his concentration on one thing. The arbitrary line drawn between the actual and the unreal, the credible and the impossible, sanity and so-called madness, was swept away. She, the descendant of the gods, knew what strange race—a race that perhaps had lingered in these crater fastnesses and myrtled groves long after it had died off the rest of the earth!—was fleeing before him through a wood alive with brightened eyes and quickened hoofs; and in her veins the slender strain of blood derived from some goat-legged, tall-eared thing—a strain asleep through the generations of her ancestors, had mastered all the rest of her heritage, and was as triumphant in her soul as in Sylvestre's body. She ran on, swiftly and without effort, and Archie ran after her.

A large red motor car had been panting down through the Midi all day, hoping to arrive at Draginoules from the further side of the tableland. The chauffeur, who was a Gascon, would have died sooner than admit ignorance, and had taken whatever road seemed best to him; and the small hours of the morning found the red car, bereft of petrol, its acetylene at the last gasp and with a burst tire, stranded on a mountain pass high above the few faint lights of Draginoules. By the failing lamps the two ladies and the chauffeur tried to understand a road map with the result that they decided the lights must be those of Grasse, little knowing they proceeded from the electrically lit wash houses of Draginoules, where the women washed long before dawn.

The chauffeur addressed his passengers at length. He urged them to find their way down on foot; they had merely to follow the road, while he stayed with his sacred trust, the car. He did not add that he would sleep very comfortably inside it. The dawn would be breaking in an hour or so, and the saints would guard them, and Americans were always safe. Besides, what was there to fear? They would soon reach those lights and find a good bed, and, he added cunningly, a cup of

tea. The elder lady was visibly allured by the prospect, but shudderingly declared, in French strongly tinged with a transatlantic accent that they would be robbed and murdered.

"Nonsense, aunt," said the younger lady ruthlessly. "Who is there to rob and murder us? We'd far better go on now."

She thought to herself that if one must arrive at a hotel luggageless, disheveled and with one's fringe out of curl, it was better to do so at night than in the unsympathetic face of day and the eye of man. Her aunt wavered and gave in, after warning her dear Gwen against blaming her if they were killed; and the two ladies, grasping their little vanity bags, set off down the mountain. And somewhere the gods that pull the wires were laughing as they drew toward each other, under incongruous conditions, four people whom those conditions made utterly incompatible.

Archie was shockingly out of condition. It was years since the running muscles of his legs had received any systematic encouragement, and his layer of superfluous flesh, though slight, shook with each stride, but he stumbled on. Each time he caught Désirée's low, mocking laugh it seemed a little further away, and now on one side and then the other, till he was running blindly, on and on; and, little as he knew it, toward the curve of the mountain track. Gwendolen and her aunt, tramping down it, heard the running feet and the breaking of bushes in the wooded slopes above them, and their hearts turned to water. They dived into that part of the woods which sloped below the road, and a moment later heard the footsteps crossing the stones of the track. . . .

Dawn broke at last, reluctant, chill, showing the woods clear-edged and motionless as though cut out of steel; glimmering on the quiet pools and the ribbed lava slopes, though the hollow of the plain still held a great lake of shadow.

Désirée's clothes lay no longer by the pool where she had bathed; no trace of human presence remained; even the marshy edge showed only trampled foot-marks, as though some goat-footed herd had watered there.

The human element was soon to be added, for, just as the cold blue light was bleaching to a pearly pallor, the strangest figure those woods had ever known came bursting and tumbling through them. Gwendolen's aunt did not look her best after a couple of hours' strenuous exercise through shrubs, with her motor bonnet on one side, her skirts

torn, one shoe gone forever, and her once-elaborate gray locks hanging on her shoulders, the wire frame of her "pompadour" showing through the disordered hair in front. She sank down on a rock, with an expression of resignation on her heat-mottled face.

Archie, breaking through the trees a few moments later, with quivering legs, only spurred on by the expectation of at last finding Désirée, thought his brain must have given way under the emotions of the past night. The fact that he was gazing on the elder Miss Gould and had apparently been pursuing the elder Miss Gould—was in itself so impossible that it seemed equally natural to attribute it to hallucination or to a disordered universe, or even to wonder whether Désirée were after all, a *loup-garou* who took on the form of others at will. Whether he or Miss Gould would have been the first to break the silence he never knew, for with a faint cry of "Aunt!" someone fell onto him from behind, only to recoil with a gasp of dismay. He was past surprise as he turned to support Gwendolen.

"Your aunt is here," he said, with the calm of utter indifference. "She is sitting on a stone."

"Archie! *Archie!* Then it was *you*—you who were chasing us?"

"Chasing you! I didn't know you were in France! I was chasing—" He stopped abruptly.

"Chasing whom?" put in the elder Miss Gould, turning to gaze at him from beneath the wry pompadour.

"Chasing no one, of course," said Archie hastily. "Whom did *you* think you were chasing, Gwendolen? I must say I am surprised to find you running after a young man like that. And in the woods at night, too! I think you owe me an explanation!"

"I! I lost aunt, and must have gone in a circle and got behind you, and then thought you were aunt. It seems to me the question is—who did you think aunt was?"

"I," broke in Miss Gould, "was pursuing someone whom I took for Gwendolen. Mr. Lethbridge—who was it?"

"I don't know," said Archie wearily; "I only wish someone could tell me, for I'm hanged if I know even *what* it was!"

They all three lay back in exhausted silence, looking at each other. The searching light of dawn revealed with pitiless impartiality not only their scratches and stains, but their suspicions and bitterness; the lack of harmony with their dignified and reticent surroundings. Nothing lovely or large found any kinship in them; they were con-

ventional little souls in conventional little bodies, and they and their suspicions and explanations seemed of an awful insignificance—even to themselves.

The livid silver line edging the seaward mountains changed to fire, while the air grew vibrant with a warmer light. Far below the roofs of Draginoules caught the gleam as the sun swam up above the loftiest range, and the first skeins of smoke changed from blue to a dusty gold. Day, warm, human everyday, had come at last, and the cruel hour of searching was over. Archie's hand instinctively went to his tie, while the women straightened their bonnets and put back the wisps of hair.

They all chatted a little in a desultory manner as Archie led the way to the village, and they all avoided each other's eyes. The women felt that nature had tricked them in some incomprehensible way into emotion of which they were ashamed, and Archie was once more of their world; they owned him as strongly as though he had never broke away. Not as completely—for him there would always be a half-fearful but half-wonderful memory.

Once, several years later, he told an analytical friend the whole story, and received an explanation that should have satisfied him. His friend descanted on the way in which the glamour of the place had strung his nerves to receptiveness; analyzed with delight the pagan temperament of Désirée—doubtless a throwback—and the wildness of the peasant blood in her which, combined with the superstitious strain she probably drew from her Provençal mother, filled her with inherited cravings that seemed almost to assume the force of memories. He pointed out how Archie had described satyrs to her before she professed to remember anything about them, and dismissed the case of Sylvestre with a few remarks of a physiological nature. The apparently dual nature of the girl was a simple enough phenomenon, in the nature of a hysterical trance. When he came to the more subtle problem of the second self that had awakened in Archie at Désirée's ascent from the pool, the conviction of those chill, sweet revels and twilight paganism that had enveloped his consciousness, his theories took a psychological turn. Given Archie's state of unnatural receptiveness and the undoubted sincerity of Désirée's emotional trance, the effect of the latter upon the former would be quite sufficient to create an aura that would envelop them like a reality.

On that day itself Archie was far from wrestling with any theories, and he grasped at actualities to keep his poise. Toward evening, when

clean beds and hot water had completed the regeneration of the ladies, he took Gwendolen to see the picture. She knew nothing of painting, but had enough tact not to make Archie shiver by saying that she "knew what she liked." Perhaps Archie's somewhat elaborately careless references to Désirée in his letters had made her a trifle uneasy—for under her smart shirtwaist she possessed, if not a womanly, still a feminine, heart—but the picture quite reassured her. The girl was not in the least pretty, merely a big, strong peasant; and how funny of Archie to have put little fauns among the sheep!

"I don't know why I did it myself," confessed Archie, "but it's given me a good title for it. I call it, 'A Shepherdess of Fauns.'"

"It ought to sell easily," remarked Gwendolen, as they turned to go back to the inn.

"I'm not sure I want to sell it," replied Archie. But he did sell it, for a very good price, and he was glad when it was gone. No one really likes to be reminded of the times when he dared approach nature unashamedly; and Archie, unlike Désirée the girl, who never remembered Désirée the nymph, had to cultivate his forgetfulness for himself.

They met Désirée outside the *buvette*; and Gwendolen, who had often been admired for her charming manners with the lower classes, spoke very kindly to her and asked about her marriage. Désirée, who looked pale and jaded, and not at all at her best, replied briefly, but with the true peasant dignity. It appeared she was going to be married very soon—Monsieur Colombini had had a rise that justified it.

"What would you have, mademoiselle?" concluded Désirée, with a shrug. "The men will not be kept waiting forever. And one must do something, after all!"

OVER THE TELEPHONE

by Aldous Huxley*

THE telephone in Walter Traill's flat stood on a table by the bed. For one who spent so much of his time in bed, who did, in fact, most of his work there (for Walter, who wrote poetry, found that inspiration flowed most freely between nine o'clock and noon, when one was lying very tranquil and warm under the quilts, only stirring from time to time to light another cigarette), this was certainly the best place for the telephone to stand. One could do one's business, he used to explain with that curious avoidance of the first person singular which always characterized his conversation, one could make one's arrangements for the evening without interrupting the flow of one's inspiration, which always became congealed in an instant if one had to get up and run about in the cold. Yes, the telephone by the bed was a great convenience, was, indeed, for Walter an absolute necessity.

Inspiration this morning was not flowing at all easily. Since his waking, nearly three hours ago, he had produced no more than two and a half octosyllables:

*Under the golden-fruited vine
Androgyne with androgyne
Languidly sports. . . .*

Ten words in a hundred and sixty minutes; that was not very good going. He had felt distracted the whole morning; had been unable to keep his attention fixed. Whenever he tried to proceed with the octosyllables, he could think only of Hermione Burges. And when, despairingly, he had turned to the crackling pages of the *Times*, it was in vain that he tried to take an interest in the political situation. Hermione's face floated between his eyes and the oracular sentences.

It was a disquieting face, like the face of one of those lovely and dangerous princesses of the Renaissance—but touched with something that wasn't at all Italian, something that was almost Oriental, Chinese. She had that high-domed forehead of the early Renaissance portraits, those waxen eyelids like the petals of a magnolia, that

* This is a representative early example of the style Huxley was to perfect in *Crome Yellow*, *Antic Hay*, and *Point Counterpoint*. It has not hitherto been republished.

white skin drawn taut and smooth over the bones. But the eyes were long and a little tilted; the mouth, too, did not quite conform to the old Italian ideal. It was wider, it was fuller; not so beautiful in itself, perhaps, but lending the face that odd perverse beauty touched with ugliness which was only Hermione's.

And then the way she dressed, the way she did her hair! Walter abandoned the *Times* to think only of that pale smooth hair, pulled sleekly back from the forehead, twisted in spiral plaits over either ear; think of nothing but those incredibly subtle clothes of hers, so simple, so ingenuous looking and making, like that schoolgirlish hair, so perverse a contrast with the face that, young and fresh in appearance as they, was yet the face of an old Pope's daughter, of a tyrant's ruthless mistress—subtle and dangerous and calmly, provocatively sensual.

Walter sighed and tried to revert his attention to the octosyllables.

*Under the golden-fruited vine
Androgyne with androgyne
Languidly sports. . . .*

Perhaps "toys" would be better than "sports." But it was no good even trying to think about his poem. He felt desperately lonely and unhappy. He was oppressed by a sense of physical emptiness, as though he had not eaten for hours. Desire had reached such a pitch that it began to rhyme, when he thought of the word, with the prophet Isaiah. Desaiiah, desaiiah—oh, the yearning in that long, long diphthong!

Making a determined effort, Walter once more picked up the *Times*. If the leader page was unreadable, perhaps he might find some pleasure and distraction among the theatrical criticisms and the reviews of music. He turned back to the page of the arts. Monsieur Vladimir Philipescu's rendering of Chopin had been exceedingly sensitive. At the Shaftesbury Theatre that veteran actress, Miss Fanny Trumball, had given her usual brilliant impersonation of an ingénue; the play, however, was a little worse than usual. Clearly, there was nothing to hold his attention here. His wandering eye traveled across the page to the theatrical advertisements.

"Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. Tonight, *Madame Butterfly*. Wednesday, *Meistersinger*. . . . Friday, *Parsifal*."

"Parsifal"—he had heard Hermione Burges speak of "Parsifal." It seemed somehow very anomalous, but she actually liked Wagner, got genuinely enthusiastic when she talked about him.

"I like his splendor" (he tried to remember her words and the way they were spoken, with excessive emphasis alternating with breathless syllables, faded and shrunk away to nothing). "I like his *richness* and his *life* and his *sensuality*. . . ."

Strange, Walter reflected, these extraordinary aberrations of taste. But suppose now one were to make some use of "Parsifal." . . .

He lay back on his pillows for a little, pondering. Then, suddenly decided, he reached for the telephone book. He would ask her to go with him to "Parsifal" on Friday. Aylmer . . . Badger . . . Bate-man . . . Beale. . . . He turned rapidly over the pages of the directory. Knowing her as little as did—he had met her once at Rumbelow's, had been two or three times, with a crowd, to her Thursday evening parties—he would have to have some sort of an excuse for asking her. Big-ham . . . Bilberry . . . Bosanquet. . . . He'd say that somebody had given him a box for "Parsifal" and that as he'd heard her talking so enthusiastically about Wagner at Rumbelow's—no, better not mention Rumbelow, damn the man!—he had thought that perhaps she would care to share it with one, don't you know. Dinner first; very early one would have to make it. Should one say the Savoy? It was close to the theatre.

Yes, that was the line to take. The box would have to have been given to him; it would be an impertinence to have bought it specially for her, on the strength of what was really so slight an acquaintance. Boswell . . . Bubbs Boddington . . . Bumpus . . . Bunyan . . . Burdett . . . Burge . . . Burges, Burges, Burges, Mrs. T. R. Burges—there she was. Langham, double two three two.

He put out his hand and drew the telephone toward him, but he did not lift the receiver at once. He had caught sight of himself—a pale face under a mop of dark hair—in the long glass of the wardrobe door.

One wasn't precisely, he reflected looking at the image, a Greek god. One had even been told, as a child, as an adult too, that one looked like a sick monkey. Not that that was a valid reason why she shouldn't like one. Sick monkeys were pathetic, oh! heart-rendingly so. Some women liked it; it was a pleasant change from the bluff, rough, gruff, tough sort of business. Ruby Dicks, for example, she had liked it—too much by half. He had made love to her in pure absence of mind, pathetically; and she had adored him with frenzy, still did. He shrugged up his shoulders, shuddering, at the recollection, shut his eyes, shook his head. It had been too awful.

But the question was, now, whether Hermione would appreciate the sick monkey. The rough gruff toughs, the brasses and the asses were more in her line.

It was a queer thing, but she had never, so far as he knew, liked anyone who wasn't perfectly awful, anyone who wasn't in some way or other a monster. Unerringly, by some sort of instinct, she always picked them out from among the whole range of her male acquaintance—unerringly—and she knew plenty of charming people too. One's self, for example. These extraordinary, unfathomable women! That one could be so intelligent and such a fool; that one could be a Renaissance princess, calm and clear-sighted and dangerous, and yet be taken in by any clown or any adventurer who chose to present himself; that one could be Hermione Burges and the mistress of Bob Rumbelow—it was past all understanding.

And what was so odd, she never seemed to learn by experience. (Walter had known her legend, peeped at odd angles into her world long before he had actually known her.) *Experientia* does it, as the Romans used to say; but we Anglo-Saxons know that it doesn't. First, there had been that blackguard Burges. She had actually married him . . . when it was palpable to any child that the man was a bully and a rogue. She had separated from Burges after eighteen months. And then she had got entangled with Diamantopoulos, the nimble Greek. If only she had read the *Æneid*, she'd have known that it is wise to fear Greeks, even when they bring presents. Not that Diamantopoulos, according to all accounts, had brought many presents; he had more often borrowed twenty pounds. And then, after seeing through the Greek, she had been able to find no better successor than fat old Bob Rumbelow, the journalist—genial enough in his way, no doubt, but a bounder, a buffoon and so childishly vain that he would go through any clown's trick for the sake of a little laughter or applause. Was Rumbelow her idea of the intellectual, the genius? What a joke, what a calamity!

And now, Walter wondered, his hand still resting on the telephone, his eyes still vacantly fixed on his own pathetic and blue-pajamaed image, would she so much as be aware of the existence of anyone so different—so well-bred so (in all modesty) fundamentally decent—as himself? These women were so incomprehensible, so insane, their values were so fantastically topsy-turvy; it seemed hopeless even to try and make her aware.

II

He withdrew his hand from the telephone. But the image of Hermione, smiling her lovely and dangerous smile, and dressed as he had seen her at Rumbelow's in the austere little suit of black cloth with something that looked like a boy's cricket shirt showing underneath the coat . . . Hermione, doubly formidable and beautiful in this absurdly ingenuous disguise, appeared so vividly before his inward eye that he quickly reached out once more for the instrument.

After all, perhaps one might be a blackguard or a buffoon all the time, without knowing it. Or perhaps one might be able to cultivate blackguardism. A coating of brass on the face, a swagger, an assurance . . . these things went a long way. Charlatanism added to merit is like a nought added to a figure . . . multiplies it by ten. Wise old Stendhal! With a little practice, surely one could learn to add that nought.

He wouldn't say, for example, that the box at Covent Garden had been given him. That would be a confession of weakness. He would just ring her up, airily, out of the blue, and say: "One has bought a box for 'Parsifal' . . . for you, because you like Wagner (which is more than one does oneself). Will you come? Dinner first . . . Friday . . . and a sandwich at one's poor rooms on the way home."

Yes, crudely, baldly, boldly, he would just say it like that.

He lifted the receiver and applied it resolutely to his ear. "Parsifal," he reflected, as he listened through the buzzing chaos for a sign of life from the exchange, "Parsifal" was the ideal entertainment for the present occasion. It would surely have been difficult to find anything more richly luscious in any of the London theatres. The Grail Music in the first act, for example, and the Good Friday Music in the third. . . .

"Number, please."

"Langham, Double two three two."

"Double two thr-r-ree two, Lang. . . ." The voice cut itself short and Walter was left alone once more with the buzzing chaos.

There was nothing to equal the direct appeal of this sort of erotic religiosity. Rows and rows of full blown tights at the Folies-Bergère were no match for "Parsifal." When one was seventeen one had been positively overwhelmed by it. Critically, intellectually, Hermione was still seventeen. Seventeen in mind and twenty-seven in body . . . the effect of Parsifal upon her should be something terrific. The eyes

would be very brilliant under the magnolia-petal lids, there would be a flush over the cheek-bones as she stepped out, at the opera's end, under the portico at Covent Garden. And he, still revolted by the vulgarity of the music, but all on fire with excited anticipation—he would be jostling about in the crowd, looking for the car. Quick, quick! These precious emotions evaporate, stale on the cold air like perfumes in an unstoppered phial.

Quickly, quietly, they'd go sizzling along the lamplit streets. There she'd be, leaning back in the car beside him, seen only in flashes as they passed the lamps . . . a succession of brief and lovely revelations. He wouldn't say anything. Or would he? Walter was inclined to think he wouldn't. Accidentally, perhaps, he might touch her arm, her hand.

"Have you had any reply?" the voice inquired across the chaos.

"Not yet," said Walter.

"I'll ring them again."

In his rooms everything would have been carefully prepared. There would be caviar and a variety of sandwiches and a bottle or two. The light would be shining up, from a single lamp, on to his Post-Impressionist Odalisque and she would inquire as soon as they crossed the threshold: "What's that picture?" And he'd say, casually: "Oh, that's my Matisse." And she'd be tremendously impressed. No, on second thought, she probably wouldn't be impressed at all; she would never have heard of Matisse. It would be better, perhaps, to have the light shining on nothing in particular.

There was suddenly a very definite click. Walter's heart seemed to drop with a bump on a hard pavement; he pressed the receiver closer to his ear. A loud shrill voice said "Hullo."

"Is that Mrs. Burges's?" he asked.

"Who?"

"Mrs. Burges's house. Langham, Double two three two?"

"Wrong number," said the voice with ill-temper.

Walter got through to the exchange and repeated the number. Left alone once more with the buzzing, he pictured her as she would be, that Friday evening, in his rooms. He saw her, lying back in the deep sofa, still flushed, still bright eyed with the intoxication of the music; and perhaps the wine would have helped a little. One would hear her softly humming the notes of the chime.

And then, somehow (it was rather difficult to picture the transition between the last scene and this), quite suddenly, one would be kissing

her—kissing her with passion, her mouth, her tight-lidded eyes, her arms, her breast. And she would lie there in his arms, faintly, remotely smiling, as though from some other world. And they would both be happy.

Hermione's voice was suddenly in his ears.

"Hulo-o"

It was an unmistakable voice, a little husky and having a curious chanting intonation.

"Is that Mrs. Burges?" he managed to ask. He found himself horribly embarrassed, taken aback.

"Speaking," said the hoarse sweet voice. "Who are you?"

"This is Walter Traill."

"How nice! Good morning, Mr. Traill!"

"Good morning," said Walter. "I rang up," he went on, stammering, tumbling over his words. He had forgotten all he meant so boldly and confidently to say. "That is, I wondered if you could come, if you'd care to come, I mean—to the opera—'Parsifal,' you know—next Friday. One has been given a box, you see. And knowing how much you liked Wagner, one wondered. . . ."

His voice trailed away into silence. This wasn't at all what he had intended to say. A nought after the figure? Or a decimal point before?

"I couldn't quite catch." Her voice sounded a puzzled note. "Did you say something about 'Parsifal'?"

"On Friday," Walter repeated. "One has a box. Thought you might care to make use of it, don't you know?"

"That was *too* kind of you, Mr. Traill." She made the common phrases of politeness so warm, so richly resonant! "How charming of you to think of me!"

"One remembered what you said about Wagner at Rumbel. . . ." No, one mustn't mention that grotesque and hated name . . . "the other day at lunch, you know."

"How *nice* of you! I should have *loved* to come. But, alas, on Friday. . . ."

Despairingly, Walter took the receiver from his ear. The voice squeaked away impotently into the air like the ghost of a Punch and Judy show. He could catch an occasional word: ". . . so kind . . . so sorry . . . boring engagement . . . good-bye." Then the squeaking ceased; there was silence.

Pushing the telephone away, Walter lay back on his pillow. He had never felt so unhappy in his life before; he could have sobbed aloud.

THE GREAT WOODS

by Arthur Davison Ficke

I saw the two in moonlight;
My gun became to me
Less than an oar to a sailor
Far inland from the sea.

Proud they emerged from darkness
And paused, and stamped the ground
With living hoofs, and snuffed the air,
Circling slowly around.

Till they confronted squarely
Each other's antlered head,
And suddenly they enlocked, and shook,—
Released, and almost fled—

Then wheeled again, more sinister,
For the blind lunge and twist. . . .
Beyond them, I could dimly see,
Through the thin veil of mist,

The doe they fought for, placidly
Regarding their slow fight,
Indifferent what the end should be,
Chewing leaves in the night.

The shadows swayed; another stag
Approached her like a fawn.
He sniffed; she followed, and was lost.
The rivals battled on.

CORNELL

by *Hendrik Willem van Loon**

I

IT will not be easy to write this article. I can hear the shade of Decatur stamping up and down the floor of the attic "Remember, gentlemen," he repeats and repeats, "remember, gentlemen, our Alma Mater! May she always be right, but right or wrong, our Alma Mater!" And a hidden chorus of professional graduates intones "Far Above Cayuga's Waters " But we of Antioch, who are familiar with Saint Paul and the other saints, know well that austere face and that sombre voice which now speaketh words of solemn warning "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free "

Here is to our Alma Mater and here is to Truth May we be loyal to both!

This story begins at the beginning, which was a very warm day of a very warm month of July of the year 1902 A V N. I had come to America three days before, for no particular reason except that I wanted to go somewhere and America seemed a handier place to go to than Australia or Asia Africa was out of the running just then because a wicked tribe of Dutch farmers had forced a war upon the unprepared and defenseless British Empire, and people with a name and figure as hopelessly Dutch as mine would not have been welcomed at Cape Town And so I went to America But what I was to do there I really did not know.

Behold, therefore, a no doubt very disagreeable young man with strong convictions upon a dozen subjects of which he knew nothing, and stronger prejudices upon three dozen others of which he knew less, landing at his ancestral port of Hoboken and going to an unknown destination with the enthusiasm of a parcel post package being dispatched from Xenia to Springfield, Ohio But Providence watched over his fate I happened to have an uncle who had married an American lady of strange charm, who actually did not deserve to have fallen among the Philistines of a small Dutch city She happened to know a

* This essay on Cornell by the popular author of *The Story of Mankind*, R v R, and *Van Loon's Geography* was one of a sensational series on the universities which were printed in *The Smart Set*

man who had been in The Hague as historical adviser to the commission which was to discover who was right and who was wrong in the absurd brawl between the late President Cleveland and the late Lord Salisbury (to think that that was actually the name of a man once upon a time and not of a cigarette!) concerning the United States and Venezuela. By advice of this unknown friend, I was to spend a few years in an American college, that I might learn the current language and the equally current manners and customs of the strange new country. And so on this very hot day of the very hot month of July of the year 1902 A.V.N. I rode for several hours across many mountains (I had seen better ones in Europe, I thought, although I soon learned not to give expression to such unpatriotic sentiments), and late that afternoon I reached the town of Ithaca, Tompkins County, N. Y., U. S. A.

There I was met by a man who would never forgive me if I put his name in bold black type and stated that for sheer unselfish devotion to the happiness of others, for chivalry of purpose and nobility of soul, he might have wandered this earth a worthy companion of Saint Francis. Nor is it necessary. All good Cornellians know who I meant as soon as I uttered the word unselfishness. And then, totally ignorant of the lay of the land and in the darkness of night, I was taken to the top of a steep hill and I had my first view of Cornell.

II

High above us a myriad of stars shone with a brilliancy the like of which I had never seen in the water-soaked heavens of the Low Countries. It must have been during the summer school (I never was able to reconstruct the scene in the daytime) and many windows were lighted. Somewhere there was music. Whether it was good music or bad music I do not know. Nor does it matter. Upon such occasions all music is good.

The Library was still open. This I remember, because I was accustomed to the dignified gloom of the European libraries and I liked the sight of the cheerful fellows tripping in and out past the memorial tablets where the famous feud of Cornell's early middle ages stands engraved upon the dark slab of granite. It was an intimate picture of pleasant and gay and well-mannered people who apparently had gathered upon this spot to study and make life more agreeable for each other amid surroundings of very great charm and beauty.

This impression was strengthened the next morning. I was taken to

the lake, and there, from the distance, I beheld the high hill with its many towers—the roofs of the buildings. And when the hours struck there were carried to us the tinkly little notes of that strange little tune which becomes so much part of a Cornellian's mind that he will suddenly hear it in Moscow or Peking when the jingling of a falling spoon starts a corresponding reverberation in that deep cavern of his mind where lie buried his dearest recollections.

Then came the afternoon and a short visit to the treasure of the Library—which in the brutal light of day looked less idealistic and a little more like a good modern jail—and there, amid the treasures of those three collections that have made Cornell famous wherever scholars gather together to partake of food and thought, I was suddenly struck with a sharp vision of the past and the present. Four days earlier, sailing up the harbor of New York, someone had remarked: "There stands the greatest Renaissance city of the modern world!" I found a corresponding formula for Cornell. "Here, by the shade of Abelard, stands the greatest mediaeval college of America!" And I thought of Fulda and Hildesheim and the many mid-European cloister schools built at an even earlier age in the wilderness that the savage Teutons might learn the useful art of reading and writing. And if at that moment the great Carolus himself had come riding by on his mighty horse, I should not have been surprised to see him discuss the noble game of Arabic chess with the faithful Eginhard, his friend, although his son-in-law.

But when I spoke of this that same evening, I did not manage to make my meaning entirely clear.

"Wait until you know us a little better," said my companion while carving his name in the centre table of the Dutch Kitchen (it was a novelty in those days). "Wait until you know us a little better. Then you will understand that there is nothing mediaeval about us, but that we are keeping ahead of the rest of the Eastern colleges and soon will beat them. Let me show you the new engineering building tomorrow and the new grounds for the agricultural school. Nothing mediaeval about those." As indeed there was not.

III

Here the curtain goes down for five seconds to denote the rapid passing of twenty years. When it rises again there lies dead one of the most famous of Cornell's sons. He has fallen a victim to overwork,

to fatigue and worry, trying to put some order into the original chaos of America "over there." He is gone quite suddenly, but when his will is read it is seen that he speaks ominous words from the grave and asks his widow to do something for Cornell to make "the place more human."

The news spread as such news will—and it reached Cornell. And once more I turned to a chance neighbor at the well-known round table of the Town and Gown Club and said: "Good God, what an indictment!" But the remark was not understood.

"I don't know what the fellow was talking about," and the answer bristled with hostile suspicion. "It seems to me that we are human enough."

It seemed to Ezra Stowbody that the Gopher Prairie First National Bank was a Greek temple worthy of the heathenish Acropolis.

If I may be forgiven a bit of inverted Scriptural wisdom, I should like to state that it is not fair to hold the Fathers responsible for the sins of the Sons. When old Ezra Cornell, he of the strange goatee and the shrewd, kindly wisdom, founded his college "where all men might be able to receive instruction in all the useful arts and sciences," he hardly knew that the world was entering upon an era when the sciences would crowd the arts into a forgotten little corner of the old Beebe farm which he had just turned into the Campus of his "School."

What I am about to say is not only true of our own Ezra, but of the other Johns and Williams and Peters who during the Emersonian stage of our civilization planted and founded and builded that the coming generation might be worthy successors to the founders of the great Industrial Empire of the Western Hemisphere. They were practical men. They had been schooled in a cold world of frozen faucets and shivering parlors. They were just men and believed in equal rights for all men and women, black, white and semi-colored. They had never heard of the eight-hour day and would have laughed at the idea of the forty-two-hour week. They had added a new beatitude to the familiar creed: "Blessed are those who work, for they may enjoy the fruit of their labor."

But withal they were proud and stiff-necked aristocrats of the intellect. They well understood the value of the many things that they themselves had missed or had been able to acquire only at a terrific outlay of energy and perseverance. They insisted that their children continue the tradition of good books and honest plain talk. They had

not read widely, but they had read well. Their books were their household gods. Let their "schools" be a real centre for those things which—next to their particular denomination—were nearest to their hearts.

In the course of time they died and were solemnly deposited in the marble mausoleums which a grateful board of trustees erected in their memory.

But alas, they had been the last of our cultural Mohicans. As soon as they were dead the era of "prosperity and prosperity without stint" turned a peaceful republic into a disordered domain of "catch-as-catch-can."

The Germans, who have coined words as ugly as the decorations on poor old Zinckie's erstwhile place of business, speak of 'Massenproduktion.' We have the feebler word, 'mass-production.' It is less pompous and therefore less objectionable. The age of mass-production had set in. It turned old Ezra's school into the third or second or fourth largest (I forget which) college—it covered the old Beebe farm and miles upon miles of adjoining plow-land into a vast 'educational plant'—it made five buildings grow where but one barn had stood before—it opened wide the portals of the academic halls and it turned a mighty fortress of learning, planted in the heart of the wilderness, into a complacent educational factory.

It is hardly fair to say these unpleasant things in an article devoted to Cornell. They hold true of almost every other university, college and academy in this fair land. A college career no longer was regarded as a badge of honor, a reward for hard work. It became the birthright of every plumber's son. I use the word advisedly, and not in its genealogical sense. Heaven forbid that we should make the Tuesday Evening Transcript a new *Almanach de Gotha* for the socially elect who may grace our Seats of Learning. But the average type of student changed almost overnight.

In the olden days the registrar of a college like Cornell knew fairly well what sort of boys would apply for admission. There were the sons of the well-situated families in the nearby cities and towns. These, however, formed only a small percentage. Their comrades who gave a very definite color to the old college life were of a different ilk. They came from the farm. "Coming from the farm" in the northern part of New York State presupposed a strong and rugged physique, for only the hardier children survived in those hard pre-Sears Roebuck days. And "going to college" meant almost incredible sacrifice on the

part of both the children and the parents. When a student with such antecedents had worked his way through four years of hardships he had obtained something definite. He might not be a fit candidate for dignity of principal in a dancing academy; he might not qualify as head waiter at the Ritz, but he knew how to hack himself a career out of the unyielding granite of the work-a-day world. He stood on firm feet and, as he had bought his education at a terrible expense to himself and his parents, he appreciated what he had obtained and cherished it as Peary may have cherished the sleigh that carried him to the North Pole.

But the great migration which set in during the nineties was of a different variety. The industrial development of the Middle West had filled Detroit, Chicago, Pittsburgh and the other cities of this region with prosperous people who lacked the traditions of their old pioneering and semi-pioneering ancestors. They insisted that their children get ahead in life, and "getting ahead" meant qualifying for a better job than papa had held down. The college was there to train the boy for this purpose. Would the college kindly oblige?

Need I give the answer?

In almost every instance the college hastened forward with eager compliance, and our Higher Seats of Learning became the stationary adjuncts of so many successful correspondence schools. The college president left his cloistered study and grew into an efficient executive. And the spirit of Butler presided at the meeting of the board of trustees. Alas, it was not the spirit of Samuel, but of Nicholas—and that meant a very different story.

IV

As I said in the beginning, a short essay of this nature is apt to be very personal; it can't well be otherwise. I remember how, a few years ago, I happened to be present at a very pathetic party. It was given by one of those tactful hostesses who are forever trying to put together what God has most evidently put asunder. Suddenly she swooped down upon two of her guests and said:

"You two ought to meet each other. You must have so much in common. You are both Yale men!"

They were, and they had this in common: that they had used the same trains of the N. Y., N. H. & H. R. R. and that for four years they had been present (in different parts of the bleachers, however) at

the annual ceremony of the Victoire Morale. For the rest of their time they had been as many miles apart as His Late Majesty Nicholas Romanov and the chief tenor of his bedraggled chorus of Volga boatmen. But as they were both Yale men they were now forced to sit together that they might reminisce and be happy.

One of the two was an amiable young man who was innocent of all intellectual knowledge and suspicion. He had gone to New Haven from a good preparatory school and there he had inherited his older brother's apartment and reputation. He had rowed on the crew and as he was without any violent opinions (for the simple reason that he was without any opinions at all) he had drifted easily into all the best clubs and had been generally liked as a somewhat simple-minded but entirely courteous and affable companion. Unfortunately he had never been able to work off a condition in Freshman German and therefore he had failed to obtain a degree.

The other man was a shy and retiring young Jew, who from a state of dreadful poverty had managed to work his way up to a scholarship. He had been forced to scrape dishes in unsavory boarding-houses that he might eat, and stoke furnaces and spend endless hours in library stacks that he might pay for his bed. After college, while our sporting friend had entered papa's brokerage firm, the other boy had continued his studies and had at last taken a medical degree. He had made a name for himself as a pathologist and his days of hardship were over for good. Both men were without an ounce of false pride or equally false modesty. They liked each other and they appreciated each other's virtues, but when they tried to be Yale men in common they found themselves lost in a mire of conflicting recollections. They soon returned to dry land and went out to the dining-room where they stood around the grape-juice bowl. Prohibition they could discuss with an equal enthusiasm of honest emotion, but although their feet had trod the same campus for four years that locality as seen through the eyes of the other was to each a complete *terra incognita*.

Unfortunately this sort of thing could happen this very day to almost any pair of honest Cornellians. Fifty years of class stratification in the outside world have made their influence felt upon our colleges and the happy hours of those paradise times when all the boys—when the entire Cornell contingent—was forced to walk up and slide down the steep slopes of Buffalo Street if they would attend classes in the leaky rooms of Morrill Hall (built by the enthusiastic but inexperienced

hands of the original student body)—those days are gone and gone for good. The automobile has done more harm to the ancient feeling of a common fate than anything else. But that condition is no way peculiar to Cornell and we shall therefore hasten to leave the subject.

In the *adagio lamentoso* of our introduction, I deplored a certain intellectual deadness—a complete misunderstanding on the part of many of those who until recently were called to rule the destinies of Cornell—as to the rôle of leadership which by Divine Grace ought to be the honored duty of our seats of Higher Learning. But when I come to the second part of my symphony and hear the fiddles intone the first notes of the *scherzo*, I can once more beam upon my audience with gratitude and pleasure. When all is said and done, youth is so terribly strong, so vibrant with life and the desire to exist and to enjoy, that the most morose of pedagogues cannot quite kill the happiness of a spot like this where four thousand young men have come together on top of one of the loveliest hills in Christendom to disport themselves in their own sweet fashion without any very tangible responsibilities.

V

By nature of my profession I am obliged to sit in many a solemn meeting where the grave problems of education are being discussed. Invariably Gloom is the *leitmotiv* of the gathering. I hold my tongue and draw pictures upon any convenient scrap of paper and invariably I think of certain stories in the daily press. Open any news-sheet at random and make for the agony column of Europe. Therein the patient reader is told of the desperate straits of Italy or Spain, of Lithuania or Buffoonia-on-the-Baltic. The respective budgets of these distant lands are explained. The inevitable deficits are shown in all the gruesome nakedness of a horribly deflated currency.

Famous professors of *Economia Politica* duly interviewed by the gentlemen of the Press then step forward to draw the inevitable conclusions and they depict a country where a shivering humanity dejectedly awaits the hour of doom or hastens from the breadline of the kindly Quakers to the soup-line of the not less kindly Mr. Hoover. But when our own friends return from these distant neighborhoods after a pleasant summer of profitable holidaying, they inform us that life seems to continue very much as life has continued ever since the original cell began to disport itself in the original ooze. It is true that people of Austria and Bavaria and Lithuania wear old and shabby

clothes and that shoes and stockings are rare luxuries. But there seems to be a certain amount of laughter, of happiness, and a total absence of a Jobean pose.

If the population of the aforementioned countries is doomed to live in hovels and amid the ruins, they at least have made up their minds that they are going to be cheerful paupers. They drink a mean wine when the better sort has been bought up by the profiteers from London and Paris. They play their tunes upon cheap little Mittenwald fiddles when the ancestral Stradivarius has been acquired by the buyer of Mr. John Wanamaker and has become an object of the daily literary rhapsody of that stern moralist of Philadelphia and New York. They shiver in their cold rooms, but they embrace their lady-love as warmly as if they dwelt in a steam-heated flat.

In short, life has proved so strong that it has defeated hunger and cold and the hollow despair of economic and political collapse. The same is true of the Cornell undergraduates. While we worry about the apparent collapse of scholarship they, the undergraduates, live in a world of their own and the doings and undoings of a thousand professors with a thousand little intellectual mops are not going to influence their happiness by one single iota.

Once they have left the strangely ramshackle surroundings of the railroad stations, have paid their eight cents into the coffers of the street-car company, have become accustomed to the rhythmic click of car 47's ancient and time-honored flat wheel, they enter into a kingdom which is theirs by the sheer exuberance of youth. Farther and farther the car speeds away from the Lehigh and the Lackawanna, leaving behind the respectable homes of Ithaca's respectable citizenry and rolling merrily through the inconsequential Main Street of this city of two tales, which was going to be a mighty shipping point for lake traffic and by the irony of fate grew into a mere background for a university.

Higher and higher up the hill the car carries them (if the trolley and the juice stay faithful)—past the old home of the wise founder of this school "where all men ought to be able to learn whatever is of interest and profit to them." It plunges into the outer zone of the East Hill boarding-houses (where the proletariat from New York's less fortunate avenues gathers) and then suddenly the top of the hill is reached and the town of Ithaca is as far distant as the mountains of the moon. Indeed, a Cornelian, were he so inclined, could spend his entire

four years on top of the hill without ever descending into this vale of haberdashery (with long term credit), Greek candy, churches that look like banks and banks that look like churches, widely famous as the commercial centre and ancient forum of Tompkins County.

Of course, there are a few disadvantages connected with a continuous and uninterrupted residence on the hill. A certain minimum of hours has to be passed with a fair degree of success lest the dreadful letter containing the "*consilium abeundi*," viz., the "bust-notice," drive away another fallen angel from his temporary heaven. But, provided this minimum of effort is sacrificed upon the altar of duty, the rest is plain sailing or skating or tobogganing or rowing or cross-country running or whatever happens to be nearest to the heart of the lucky dog who has been turned loose into these Elysian fields of undergraduate happiness.

It is true that the weather is somewhat harsh. In summer the sun is likely to turn the asphalt into a semblance of unleavened dough. Often during the winter does a lusty wind, which bloweth high above Cayuga's icy waters, make one wish for a third layer of mackinaw and leather waistcoat. But these are mere climatological details. There is a long autumn of wondrous beauty. There is the spring, when the most lowly of towngirls assumes the estate of Heloise or Beatrice. But, best of all, there is at all times the feeling of complete and untrammelled freedom.

The spirit of that great old man, Ezra Cornell, now so peacefully asleep in the marble sarcophagus of that little chapel which he shares with his chief advisers and generals in the glorious battle upon sectarianism and militant Methodism, that spirit of understanding liberalism has survived all attempts at destruction. Ezra was a Quaker, we are told. Perhaps so. But he was a Quaker who had mysteriously partaken of the pagan doctrine which insists that man, in order to be truly happy, shall find salvation after his own will. He gathered around him a group of scholars whose very names became synonymous with freedom of intellectual action. None of them survives, but their work goes on.

In the heart of the Campus stands this college chapel. Like its counterpart in Ferney, it is dedicated to no special saints, but only to the worship of a kindly God. It offers the hospitality of its pulpit to preachers of every denomination. It has elevated Florence Nightingale to sainthood and has steadfastly declined to reduce religion to an

Incorporated Company with preferred shareholders and deferred dividends. It is flanked by a semi-official branch of the inevitable Y. M. C. A. The irrepressible worthies who guide its destinies have managed to degrade the University by an occasional visitation from the Rev. Dr. Billy Sunday and his like. But these sporadic efforts at millenniumizing have come and have gone like the measles or chicken pox, and no one has been any the worse for the trumpeting of Brother Rodeheaver's fanfaronous trombone. And the undergraduate body goes the even tenor of its ways and reveres God in His wondrous work of mountain and lake and high, storm-swept sky.

Half a century ago Cornell was a dangerous experiment, regarded with suspicion by the good people of the East as a wicked adventure into the realm of irresponsible science and dangerous social experiment. To refer to those early days seems to recall a past as remote as the great Lutheran controversy of the sixteenth century. The enthusiasm of that early period of struggle and despair and final triumph was overtaken by the eager and noisy zeal of the preachers of the great industrial era. Cornell, from being an advance post in an indifferent cultural territory, fell a victim to the enemy and became a bulwark of practical efficiency.

The old "school" of Ezra grew into the unwieldy "plant" that covers untold square miles of territory. It would be unfair to draw a moral or to preach a lesson. After diligent and due search, a leader has been found to assume this heritage of hope and promise.

The future of a great idea is in the hands of a new man.

Lord help us, we don't envy him his job!

CARNIVAL

by Robert Hillyer

I had said to my beloved,
 "I can not give you bread.
Bitter is my bounty,
 Your spirit shall be fed
With beauty and with sorrow,"—
 So to my Love I said.

I had told the friend who served me,
 "I can not give you gold.
Meagre is my payment,
 A fire when you are cold,
A hand when you are stricken,"—
 This to my friend I told.

Love set upon my table
 A feast of wine and bread.
Friendship filled my coffers
 With heaps of shining gold.
"Come, share my splendid banquet,"
 So to my Love I said;
"Come, and enjoy my riches,"
 This to my friend I told.

Now strangers in the street hear song
And laughter rings the whole night long.

I'M A STRANGER HERE MYSELF

by Sinclair Lewis*

I

TRAVEL broadens the mind. It also quickens the sympathies and bestows on one a ready fund of knowledge. And it is useful to talk about when you get back home.

The Johnsons have now been broadened and quickened. The signature "J. Johnson & Wife," followed by "Northnapolis, G. C.," appears in hotel registers from Florida to Maine. "G. C.," of course, stands for their state, the state with the highest bank-deposits and moral standards of any in the Union—the grand old state of God's Country. Let me tell *you*, sir, whenever you meet a man from God's country, he's willing to tell you so. And does.

J. Johnson & Wife had raised their children and their mortgage, and had bought a small car and a large fireless cooker, when the catastrophe happened. Mrs. Johnson was defeated for the presidency of the Wednesday and Chautauqua Reading Circle by a designing woman who had talked herself into office on the strength of having spent a winter at Pasadena, California, observing the West. Mrs. Johnson went home with her hat-brim low and her lips tight together, and announced to Mr. Johnson that they would travel, and be broadened and quickened.

Mr. Johnson meekly observed that it would be nice to explore the Florida Everglades, and to study business conditions in New York. So, in December, they left their eldest son in charge of the business, and started on an eight-months' tour of the Picturesque Resorts of Our Own Land. In fact, they were going to have an itinerary. Mrs. Johnson's second cousin, Bessie, had suggested the itinerary. Cousin Bessie had spent two weeks in Florida. She said it was all nonsense to go to places like Palm Beach and St. Augustine—just because rich snobs from New York went there was no reason why independent folks from God's Country, that did their own thinking, should waste their good money. So, with Cousin Bessie's help, Mrs. Johnson made out the following schedule of the beauty-spots of Florida:

Jacksonville, East Palatka, South Daytona, North Tampa, West

* In this hitherto unpublished story we see the first special use of the vernacular and the acute eye and ear for American types which made a Nobel Prize winner out of the author of *Main Street*, *Babbalanza*, etc.

Miami, Sulphur Water, Jigger Mounds, Diamond Back Ridge, Flatwoods, New Iowa, New Dublin, New Cincinnati, and New New York.

It takes a lot of high-minded heroism to stick faithfully to an itinerary, what with having to catch trains at midnight and all, but with the negligible assistance of Mr. Johnson, Mrs. Johnson stuck to it, though they often had to do two towns in one day. And oh! the rewards in culture! It is true they didn't have time to stop and look for orange-groves or Seminoles or millionaires, but they often felt as though they could smell the odor of oranges wafted to them on the gay breezes, though that may perhaps have been due to fellow-tourists eating oranges and peanuts. Certainly they saw plenty of palms, and at Jacksonville, in the Boston Museum of Curiosities, Including the Biggest Fish Ever Killed, in Fierce Marine Battle, by Capt. Pedro O'Toole, the Johnsons beheld a real live alligator.

After the trials and weariness of their explorations, Mrs. Johnson permitted them to settle down for a six-weeks' rest at the Pennsylvania House, in New Chicago, the City Beautiful of the Southland.

New Chicago may not be as old as St. Augustine and these towns that make such claims about antiquity, and heaven only knows if Ponce de Leon really did find any Fountain of Youth at all, and New Chicago may not be filled with a lot of millionaires chasing around in these wheel-chairs and drinking brandy and horse's necks, but New Chicago is neighborly, that's what it is, neighborly. And homey. It was founded by Northern capital, just for tourists. If a gentleman wishes to wear comfy old clothes, he doesn't find some snob in white pants looking askance at him. And New Chicago is so beautiful, and all modern conveniences—none of these rattletrap houses that you find in some Southern cities. It has forty miles of pavement, and nineteen churches, and is in general as spick and span as Detroit or Minneapolis. Why, when you go along the streets, with the cozy boarding-houses, and the well-built private houses of frame, or of ornamental brick with fancy porches and bay-windows and colored glass over the front door, and these nice new two-story concrete bungalows, you can scarcely tell you aren't in a suburb of New York or Chicago, it's all so wide-awake and nicely fixed up and full of Northern hustle. And there's very little danger of being thrown into contact with these lazy, shiftless, native Florida crackers, just fishermen and farmers and common, uninteresting people that have never heard about economics or osteopathy or New Thought or any modern movements. Not but what New Chi-

cago is very Southern and resorty, you understand, with its palms and poinsettias and all sorts of exotic plants and beauty in general.

There isn't any liquor or dancing to tempt the men-folks, and there is an educational Chautauqua every January, with the very best entertainers, and finally New Chicago has, by actual measurement, more lineal miles of rocking chairs and nice women gossiping and knitting than Ormond and Daytona put together.

At first Mr. Johnson made signs of objecting to the fact that nobody at New Chicago seemed to go fishing. But the hotel and Board of Trade literature convinced him that there was the best fishing in the South within easy reach, and so he settled down and got a good deal of pleasure out of planning to go fishing some day; in fact, went so far as to buy some hooks at the drug-store. He found some men from God's Country who were in the same line of business as himself, and they used to gather in the park and pitch quoits and talk about business conditions back home and have a perfectly hilarious time swapping jokes about Ford cars, and Mike and Pat, and Jakey and Ikey.

Mrs. Johnson also made many acquaintances, such nice, chatty, comfy people, who just took her in and told her about their grandchildren, and made her feel welcome right away.

You see, the minute you arrive at New Chicago, you go and register your name and address at the Board of Trade Building, and all the people from your state look you up immediately, and you have Wisconsin picnics, or Ohio card-parties, or New Hampshire parades, or Middle-West I. O. O. F. suppers. Almost every evening there is some jolly little state gathering in the parlor of one of the hotels, with recitations and songs—Gospel and humorous—and speeches about the state, if there are any lawyers present. Everybody has to do a stunt. Mrs. Johnson made such an impression at the God's Country Rustic Skule Party, when she got up and blushed and said, "I didn't know I was going to be called on for a piece, and I hadn't thought of anything to say, and after hearing all the nice speeches I guess I'll just say 'ditto!'" Mr. Johnson told her afterward that her stunt made the hit of the evening.

New Chicago was no less desirable from a standpoint of economy. For thirty-two dollars a week the Johnsons had three meals a day, nice, wholesome homey meals, with no French sauces and fancy fixin's, and a dainty room such as would, to quote the hotel prospectus, "Appeal to the finest lady of the land, or most hardened tourist, with

handsome Michigan Chippendale bureau, two chairs in each room, and bed to lull you to happy dreams, after day spent in the jolly sports of New Chicago, strictly under new management, new linen of fine quality to appeal to heart of most fastidious, bathroom on each floor, ice water cheerfully brought by neat and obliging attendants."

If you were one of these nervous, strenuous folks who felt that you had to have a lot of young people, why, there were several nice young people in town, though it is true that there was quite a large proportion of older people who had reached the point where they were able to get away from business in the winter-time. Still there were some girls who played the piano, and knew pencil and paper games, and they were the life of the knitting circle with their gay young chatter, especially Miss Nellie Slavens, the well-known Iowa professional reader, who scarcely looked a day over thirty, and was a college graduate, the South Dakota Dairy College. Then there was the clerk of Ocean Villa, right next door, such a sociable young man from Trenton, always in demand for parties, and looked so well in his West Palm Beach suit.

And if you wanted sports there were athletic exercises a-plenty, though there wasn't this crowd that show off their silk bathing-suits on the beach, and pay twenty-five dollars for an aeroplane ride, as they do at Palm Beach. Any bright day you could see eight or ten people in bathing at Rocky Shore. Almost every boarding house had a croquet ground, and three of them had tennis courts. The Mayberry sisters, Kittie and Jane, nice sensible girls of thirty or so, were often to be seen playing. And you could always get up a crowd and charter Dominick Segui's launch, when the engine was in repair, and have a trip down to the shell mound. So, you see, there was any amount of rational sport, and no need for anyone to go to these sporty places.

In short, the Johnsons found every day at New Chicago just one round of innocent pleasures. After a good, wholesome, hearty breakfast of oatmeal, steak, eggs, buckwheats, sausage, and coffee—none of these grits and corn-bread that they have the nerve to offer you for breakfast some places in the South—the Johnsons read the *Northern-apolis Herald*, which they got from a live, hustling newsdealer from Minneapolis, and had so much enjoyment out of learning about the deaths and sicknesses and all back home, though it did hurt Mrs. Johnson to see how the new president of the Wednesday Reading Circle was letting it run down. Then they went over to the drug-store, run by a live, hustling Toledo man, and Mr. Johnson bought three Flor de

Wheeling cigars, while Mrs. Johnson had a chocolate ice-cream soda and some souvenir post-cards. Then for the rest of the day they were free to walk, or talk, or just sit and be comfy on the porch of their hotel. And there was always such an interesting group of broad-gauged, conservative, liberal, wide-awake, homey, well-traveled folks on the porch to talk to.

For you who may not have been broadened and quickened, or had opportunities for elevating and informative talk, I will give an example of such a conversation as might have been heard on the porch of the Pennsylvania House at any time between seven-thirty A.M. and nine-thirty P.M., and I assure you it isn't a bit above the average run in New Chicago:

"Well, I see there's some new God's Country people come to town, Mr. Johnson—Willis M. Beaver and wife, from Monroe County. Staying at the Chateau Nebraska."

"Well, well! Why, I've met his brother at the state convention of Order of Peaweevils. Funny, him being here, way off in the Sunny South, and me knowing his brother. World's pretty small, after all. But still, it certainly is a liberal education to travel."

"Oh, Mrs. Johnson, don't you want to come to our basket-weaving club? We make baskets out of these long pine needles, with raffia—"

Before Mrs. Johnson can answer her husband says, quick as a flash, with that ready wit of his, "Say, uh, Mrs. Bezuzus, I'm glad those pine needles are good for something anyway!"

"Ha, ha!" asserts Mr. Smith. "You said something there! Why, I'd rather have a West Virginia oak in my yard than all the pines and palms in Florida. Same with these early strawberries they talk so much about, not but what it's nice to write home to the folks that you're having strawberries this time of year, but I swear, we wouldn't feed 'em to hogs, up where I come from."

"You hit it right, Brother Smith." It is Dr. Bjones of Kansas speaking, and after Mrs. Bezuzus has suitably commented on the manners, garments, and social standing of some passing newlyweds, Dr. Bjones goes on in his forcible scientific manner: "Same with these Southern fish, not but what I like fresh sea-food and crabs, but I tell you these bass and whittings can't hold a candle to the fresh-water pickerel you get up North. Then these Floridians talk so much about how poisonous their darned old rattlesnakes are. Why, we got rattlers in Kansas that are just as bad any day!"

"But what gets me is the natives, Doc. Shiftless. What this country needs is some Northern hustle."

"That's so, Brother Snuck. Shiftless. And besides that—"

"Oh, Mrs. Smith, I want to show you the sweater I'm knitting."

"—besides being shiftless, look at how they sting us. Simply make all the money they can out of us tourists. Oranges two for a nickel! Why, I can buy jus' good oranges at home for that!"

"And the land! They can talk all they want to about rocky hill soil, but I wouldn't give one of my Berkshire Hill holdings for all the land south of Baltimore. I can sell you—"

"Pretty warm to-day."

"Yes, I was writing to Jessie, guess she wished she was down here. She wrote me it was snowing and ten below—"

Mrs. Johnson was always afire for accurate botanical information, and of the scientific Dr. Bjones she inquired, "What are these palmettoes good for?"

"Well, you know, I'm kind of a stranger in Florida, too, but I believe the natives eat the nuts from them."

"Oh, can anybody tell me what connections I make for Ciudad Dinero?"

"Why, you take the 9:16, Mrs. Bezuzus, and change at Lemon Grove—"

"No, you change at Avocado and take the jitney—"

"Is there a good hotel at Ciudad?"

"Well, I've heard the Blubb House is a first-class place; three-dollar-a-day house. Oh, how did you like the Royal Miasma at—"

"Oh, I suppose it's awful famous, and it's very dressy, everybody changed their clothes for supper, but I prefer Cape Cod Court, not an expensive place, you understand, but so homey—"

"Yes, but for table give me Dr. Gunk's Health Cottage, and the beds there—"

"Well, we started in on the West Coast and went to St. Petersburg and Tampa and Fort Myers, and then back to Ocala and Silver Springs, and took the Ocklawaha trip and all, and we stopped a day at Palatka—"

"Oh, Mrs. Bjones, how do you do that stitch?"

Often the crowd on the porch ceased these lighter divertissements and spoke seriously of real highbrow topics, like Bryan and Villa and defense and T. R. and self-starters and Billy Sunday and Harold Bell

Wright. The Johnsons certainly had come to the right shop for being broadened and quickened, and Mrs. Johnson often told her husband that she would take back to the Wednesday Reading Circle such a fund of ready information and ideas as a Certain Person couldn't have gotten in California if she'd stayed there a hundred years!

So went the Johnsons' hours of gaieties many-colored and tropical, and when the long, happy day was over, New Chicago afforded them a succulent supper or a dainty repast, and then ho! for the movies, and no city has better movies than New Chicago, scenes from the whole wide world spread before you there on the screen, scenes from Paris and Peking and Peoria, made by the best Los Angeles companies. At least once a week the Johnsons were able to see their favorite film hero, Effingham Fish, in a convulsing comedy.

How wondrous 'tis to travel in unfamiliar climes!

Spring was on its way, and at last the Johnsons were ready to bid farewell to New Chicago, the land of mystery and languor, adventure and dolce far niente.

Their trunk was packed. Mr. Johnson's slippers had been run to earth, or at least to dust, under their bed, and his razor-strop had been recovered from behind the bureau, when Mrs. Johnson suddenly exclaimed, "Oh! Why, we haven't studied the flora and fauna of Florida yet, and I don't know but what we ought to, for club-papers."

"Well, you haven't got all the time in the world left for it," said Mr. Johnson, who had a pretty wit.

"Well, we're all packed, and we have three hours before the train goes."

She dragged him out and they hired a surrey driven by a bright, hustling Northern negro—not one of these ignorant Southern darkies—and they galloped out to Dr. Bible's orange-grove, admission ten cents, one of the show-places in the suburbs of New Chicago.

There it was, trees and fruit and—and everything; a sight to broaden and quicken one.

The Johnsons solemnly gazed at it. "Yes," said Mrs. Johnson, "that's an orange-grove! Just think! And grape-fruit. . . . It's very pretty. . . . I wonder if they sell post-card views of it."

"Yes," said Mr. Johnson, "that's an orange-grove. Well, well! . . . Well, I guess we better drive on."

They next studied the shell mound. There's something very elevating about the sight of such a relic of long-past ages—shows how past

ages lived, you know—gives you a broader sympathy with history and all that. There she was, all in layers, millions of shells, just where the Indians had thrown them. Ages and ages ago. The Johnsons must have gazed at the mound for five or ten minutes. Mr. Johnson was so interested that he asked the driver, "Do they ever find tommyhawks in these mounds?"

"Don't know, sir," said the driver thoughtfully. "I'm a stranger in New Chicago."

"Yes," said Mr. Johnson, "I shouldn't wonder if they found relics there. Very, very ancient, I should say. When you think of how filling just one oyster-fry is, and then all these shells—Well, mama, I guess that's about all we wanted to see, isn't it?"

"Well, we might drive back by Mr. Capo's estate; they tell me he has some fine Florida shrubbery there."

They passed the Capo estate, but there wasn't much to see—just trees with kind of white berries, and tall shrubs with stalks curiously like the bamboo fish-poles that boys use, back home. Mrs. Johnson's eagle glance darted to the one object of interest, and she wanted to know something:

"Stop, driver. John, I wonder what that plant is there, like a little palm, with that thing like a cabbage in the center. I wonder if it isn't a pineapple plant."

We, having the unfair position of author, know that it was really a sago palm—not that we wish to boast of our knowledge of floras, and so, if you will pardon our interruption:

"Well," said Mr. Johnson helpfully.

"I understand they grow farther south. But even so this might be an erotic pineapple, just grown here in gardens."

"Well, maybe. There's a couple of people coming. Why don't you ask them?"

They let the first of the two approaching men pass them—he was only a common, ignorant native. But the second was a fine, keen, hustling fellow on a bicycle, and Mrs. Johnson hailed him: "Can you tell me what that plant is?"

"That, madam—"

The Johnsons listened attentively, alert as ever in acquiring knowledge.

"—that plant? Well, I don't just exactly know. I'm a stranger here myself."

The Johnsons had to hurry back for their train, but they interestedly discussed all the flora and fauna on the way, including pines, buzzards, and pickaninnies. "Isn't it nice," said Mrs. Johnson, "to plunge right out and explore like this! I just bet that cat, with her winter in California, never stirred out of her own dooryard. Well, Florida certainly has been a novel experience, and improved our minds so much. Driver, is that a mocking-bird, on that skinny dead tree?"

"Yassum, that's a mocking-bird. . . . Or maybe it's a robin."

II

Adding experiences in Georgia and Virginia and the Carolinas to their knowledge of Florida, the Johnsons saw and drank deep of Savannah, Charleston, Asheville, Richmond, and Newport News. They were able to do all five cities in six days, while the Bezuzuses had taken eight for them. In Charleston they saw Calhoun's grave and learned all about the aristocratic society. They were so pleasantly entertained there, by a very prominent and successful business acquaintance of Mr. Johnson's, a Mr. Max Rosenfleisch of New York, who had bought a fine old Southern mansion in Charleston and thus, of course, was right in with all the old families socially. Mr. Rosenfleisch said he liked the aristocrats, but was going to change a lot of their old-fashioned social ways, and show them how to have a real swell time, with cabarets and theater parties, instead of these slow dances, and teach them to dine at seven instead of three or four. The Johnsons were quite thrilled at witnessing the start of this social revolution—I tell you, it's when you travel that you have such unusual adventures. They themselves would actually have met some of the inner social set of Charleston, but Mr. Rosenfleisch was having the den redecorated before giving any more of his smart, exclusive parties, and meantime the Johnsons had to be getting on—to a tourist, time is valuable.

At the beginning of spring, when the narcissi and the excursionists are out, the Johnsons arrived at Washington, where every good citizen should go, to show the lawmakers that we uphold their hands, and to give them our ideas about enlarging the army. The Johnsons found the nicest sightseeing car, with such a bright young man from Denver for barker, and he told how high the Washington Monument was, how much the Patent Office had cost to build, how long it had taken to decorate the Congressional Library in the Spanish Omelet style, how

far the guns in the Navy Yard would shoot, where Joe Cannon lived, and numerous other broadening and quickening facts which filled them with pride in being citizens of the greatest country in the world.

The Johnsons' congressman received them with flattering attentions which would have turned heads less level than theirs; he rushed over and shook hands with them the minute they came into his private office, and while just for the moment he couldn't remember their name, he had it right on the tip of his tongue, and said, "Why, of course, of course," when Mr. Johnson refreshed his memory. He recalled perfectly having shaken hands with them once at Northnapolis. He was so sorry that he was expecting the Ways and Means Committee to meet in his office, right away, for he did so want to have them stay there and chat with him about the folks back home. As an indication of his pleasure in seeing them, he honored them with a special card which enabled them to hear the epoch-making debates in Congress, from a gallery reserved just for distinguished visitors and friends of congressmen. As they listened to a vigorous oration on the duty on terrapin, Mrs. Johnson said triumphantly: "John, I guess that cat never heard anything like that in her Pasadena that she's always talking about at the Reading Circle!"

Travelers have to be of heroic mold to endure the dangers and disasters of exploration; and the Johnsons showed the quiet dignity of *noblesse oblige* during a most disagreeable incident at Washington. . . . Mrs. Johnson wished to find the house in which Commodore Decatur had lived, as an ancestor of hers had been a very near and dear friend of one of the Commodore's gunswabbers. She asked quite a number of apparently well-informed tourists, but, with a pathetic lack of sound information, they all murmured that they didn't know, being themselves strangers in Washington. Then she had the original idea of asking the clerk at their hotel.

"Decatur House?" he said. "I know where the Ebbitt House is, and the White House, and Colonel House, but I pass up the Decatur House. Sorry . . . Here, boy, shoot this package up to 427."

"Why, I mean the historic old mansion of Commodore Decatur."

"Madam, I can tell you where to get your kodak films developed, and where to find the largest oysters in town, and where to pay your bill, and what time the 5:43 train goes, but that's all I know. I come from Chicago, and if God is good to me, I'm going back there, where there's no congressmen, and they keep the tourists inside the Loop."

"Well, can't you tell us where we can find out?"

"Madam, you will find a guide-book at the news-stand."

From the news-stand they overheard the clerk saying to a fellow menial:

"—yes, I know, I oughtn't to be a grouch, but she wouldn't take 'no' for an answer. And ten minutes ago some other female wanted to know where Lincoln was buried, and just before that an old boy was sore because I couldn't tell him what is the sum total of all the pensions the Government is paying, and before that somebody wanted to know how much the dome of the Capitol weighs. These tin-can paper-bag tourists drive me wild. I ain't just an information bureau—I'm a whole bedroom suite, instalment plan."

Mr. Johnson said to his wife with that quiet force which all his associates in Northernapolis know and admire, "If he means us by 'tin-can paper-bag tourists,' I'm going to chastise him, I am, no matter what it costs! In fact, I'll speak to the manager!"

"Now, John," his wife urged, "he simply is beneath your contempt."

"Well, perhaps that's right."

The Johnsons decided not to waste a quarter on a guide-book, and strolled out to ask a policeman where the Decatur House was.

Although they found that Washington was like Florida in needing Western hustle, what with the service so slow that they didn't finish dinner before twelve-thirty, some noons, yet the Johnsons discovered a news-stand where they could buy the *Northernapolis Herald*, and there was the nicest big drug-store run by a live, hustling Milwaukee man, where Mr. Johnson could get his favorite Flor de Wheeling cigars, while Mrs. Johnson had a chocolate ice-cream soda and some post-cards. And a movie-theater featuring Effingham Fish in comedies. So, altogether, in their Washington sojourn they had much homey pleasure as well as broadening insight into how public affairs are conducted. And the nicest souvenirs.

Again they took their staves and wardrobe-scrip and continued their pilgrimage to the ancient and historic spots of our own land. They were able to do Baltimore and Philadelphia thoroughly in two days, and would have finished up Atlantic City in another day, except that they found it was so much cheaper to get rates by the week. Then off for New York.

Mrs. Johnson was willing to sacrifice, to wear herself to the bone,

studying the deeper esthetic, psychological and economic problems of New York, that she might bring home new ideas to the Wednesday Reading Circle. But New York wouldn't let itself be studied. It was perfectly crazy. Everybody in New York, they found, spent all his time in cafés, tea-rooms, cabarets, or Bohemian restaurants where women smoke. The only homey, comfortable place they found was a nice quiet drug-store where Mr. Johnson got his Flor de Wheeling cigars. And the prices—! They were glad to pass on to New Haven, to Hartford, the Berkshires, and Boston—where they saw several headquarters of Washington, and the most interesting graves, Emerson and Hawthorne and all sorts of people, and such nice artistic post-cards. Then to Maine, and, in mid-summer, down to Cape Cod, and Provincetown.

The Johnsons didn't plan to spend more than one day at Provincetown. They felt that Northernapolis was beginning to need them, and they had really seen everything there was to see in the East and South. But at Provincetown they had such a pleasant surprise that they stayed two whole weeks—they ran into Dr. and Mrs. Bjones of Wichita, with whom they had had the jolly times at New Chicago. With the Bjoneses the Johnsons picnicked on the dunes, and even went swimming once, and sat on the porch of Mrs. Ebenezer's boarding house, discussing various hotels and the Bjoneses' interesting itinerary. They didn't want to be mean, but they couldn't help crowing a little when they found that they had seen six graves of famous men which the Bjoneses had missed entirely!

The Johnsons didn't really like Provincetown. Of course the Bjoneses were interesting, and after a time they met some nice comfy people from Indianapolis and Omaha, and Mr. Johnson was able to get his Flor de Wheeling cigars. But Provincetown was filled with fishermen, acting as though they owned the place, and smelling it all up with their dories and schooners and nets and heaven knows what all, dirty, common Portuguese and Yankee fishermen, slopping along the street in nasty old oilskins covered with fish-scales, and not caring if they brushed right up against you. And the old wharves, all smelly. Mr. and Mrs. Johnson were the first to be interested in any new phenomenon and once they went right out on a wharf and asked all about the fishing industry and whaling. But still—as Mr. Johnson said with that ready satire which made him so popular a speaker at the dinners of the Northernapolis Chamber of Commerce—they didn't care to associate

with dead fish all their lives, even if they did like Effingham Fish in the movies!

When the Bjoneses left there was nothing more to study, nothing to observe.

Said Mrs. Johnson, "We've seen every inch of the South and East, now, and no one can say we haven't been unprejudiced and open-minded—the way we've gone into the flora and fauna, and among industries and all—but I must say we haven't seen a single place that begins to come up to Northernapolis."

"You never said a better thing in your life, mama, and what's more, we'll start for Northernapolis to-morrow!"

They were due to arrive in Northernapolis at two P.M. Mrs. Johnson was making notes for Wednesday Reading Circle papers about the Fruit of the Tropics, the Negro Problem, Fishing on Cape Cod, and How the Government Is Conducted at Washington.

"Guess that hen won't talk so much about Pasadena after this," Mr. Johnson chuckled. "Say, we'll have time to say 'howdy' to the folks and go to the movies to-night, to celebrate our return. And I'll be able to get a decent cigar again—can't buy a Flor de Wheeling on a single one of these trains. Well, mama, it'll be pretty good to get back where we know every inch, and won't have to ask questions and feel like outsiders, eh?"

Such a surprise as it would be for the children! The Johnsons hadn't wired them they were coming.

Northernapolis! The fine, big, dirty factories—evidences of Northernapolis's hustling spirit! The good old-fashioned homey station! The Central House 'bus!

They stood out on Main Street, excitedly hailing a street car. Then—

You see, as a matter of fact this isn't a satire, but a rather tragic story about two pathetic, good-hearted, friendly yearners, as you should already have perceived—

Then Mr. Johnson dropped his suit-case and stood amazed. A block down from the station was a whole new row of two-story brick stores. "Why," he exclaimed, "I never read about that row going up!" He was bewildered, lost. He turned to a man who was also waiting for the car and inquired, "What's those new buildings?"

"Dunno," said the man. "I'm a stranger here myself."

SPOOF RIVER ANTHOLOGY

— by Gordon Seagrove*

1—MYRTLE FINK

I AM Myrtle Fink, first name Foofoo,
Daughter of old Tom Fink, who used to do his drinking
By nightfall, near the gasworks,
And of Mrs. Fink, my mother, who was born Lottie Leftover, in
Michigan, but moved away.
(Peace be to your soul, Lottie Leftover Fink; you never had any after
the old man left the gasworks!)

I was a happy girl indeed, and went about bathing the dishes,
Teaching the cat proprieties and watering the geranium,
Which was all my father left me.
Then one day came unto the village a city fellow.
His name was Hopwith Zeal, and he taught me the one-step
And my shins are sore and aching, and I know no happiness.
Curses on you, Hopwith Zeal!
Hop with zeal?
I cannot!

2—RICHARD SOSORRY

I knew you first, Richard Sosorry, as a scholarly weakling
When you were ten and I was twelve.
Your muscles were puny, and you exhaled the odor of sanctity as you
walked dreamily by, reading Corinthians.
And so I defended you.
Once, Richard, you will remember in your villa in Canada,
I walloped one of your oppressors—by name one Mike McDuff,
Whose father, Brian McDuff, begat him with the connivance of Mrs.
McDuff,
Now dead and decently buried,
(Thanks to the county).
It nearly ruined me, Richard, but I did it, for I loved you,
And with pride I saw you take your seat in the First National,
Knowing that now you'd found your world.

* This was the first and most successful of the parodies of Edgar Lee Masters' *Spoon River Anthology* which was just beginning to sweep the country as a best-seller in poetry.

And all my admiration I gave unto you freely.
And what did you do?
When "the Midnight Maidens" came, you eloped with Gladys
Gayone,
Begot in 1890 by Klaw & Erlanger,
In 1895 by Al. H. Woods,
And this year by Flo Ziegfeld.
Took her, and the savings of those who loved you, and fled
To Canada, where you now reside,
Forcing me to resume work on the milk-route.
But you shall pay, Richard Sosorry;
For some day people will quit drinking milk,
And I shall come to Canada!

3—GEORGE CHRISTMAN

I owe you much, George Christman.
Lean of frame, kind of eye, you won my trust,
And taught me the folly of lending money.
For when I was thirsty I gave you my last quarter,
For you told me you were hungry.
And one hour later I saw you drinking ale with Old Jim Spencer
In a nearby *wirtschaft*—
Jim Spencer, to whom I also gave a quarter.
So I learned my lesson.
I owe you much, George Christman
And you still owe me a quarter.

4—JENNY JONES

Jenny Jones, you were a nice girl,
Fair and fragile as the dawn,
And I loved you in spite of your father, who had twice been sent to the
Keeley Institute,
Where they said his case was hopeless.
And loving you, Jenny Jones, I asked you to be mine,
Asked you to shift your faith from God to me,
When I was clerking in Sam Fall's shoe store,
Corner of Main and Buchanan Streets,
(When it did not rain).
And you said yes.
So I loved you, Jenny Jones, with all the ardor of first love,

But you broke my heart so badly that I had to leave the store;
Yet you taught me a great truth:
That man is strongest without Woman.
For on the day of our wedding you eloped with Handsome Jack,
A cut-glass salesman who promised you—ah, many things:
A leopard coat, a limousine, a minister and more.
Poor Gertrude, if you had only come to me then!
I could have told you that Handsome Jack owed the dentist
Ten dollars.
But girls who sing in the Methodist choir are so simple.
You are probably singing in a cabaret now, Jenny,
And if instead it is the Salvation Army,
And I see you, I shall drop a dime,
Into your tambourine.

THE MOWERS

by D. H. Lawrence

There's four men mowing down by the river,
I can hear the sound of the scythe strokes, four
Sharp breaths swishing:—yea, but I
Am sorry for what's i' store.

The first man out o' the four that's mowin'
Is mine: I mun claim him once for all;
—But I'm sorry for him, on his young feet, knowin'
None o' the trouble he's led to stall.

As he sees me bringin' the dinner, he lifts
His head as proud as a deer that looks
Shoulder-deep out o' th' corn: and wipes
His scythe blade bright, unhooks

His scythe stone, an' over the grass to me!
—Lad, tha's gotten a childt in me,
An' a man an' a father tha'lt ha'e to be,
My young slim lad, an' I'm sorry for thee.

SUCH A PRETTY LITTLE PICTURE

*by Dorothy Parker**

I

MR. WHEELLOCK was clipping the hedge. He did not dislike doing it. If it had not been for the faintly sickish odor of the privet bloom, he would definitely have enjoyed it. The new shears were so sharp and bright, there was such a gratifying sense of something done as the young green stems snapped off and the expanse of tidy, square hedge-top lengthened. There was a lot of work to be done on it. It should have been attended to a week ago, but this was the first day that Mr. Wheelock had been able to get back from the city before dinnertime.

Clipping the hedge was one of the few domestic duties that Mr. Wheelock could be trusted with. He was notoriously poor at doing anything around the house. All the suburb knew about it. It was the source of all Mrs. Wheelock's jokes. Her most popular anecdote was of how, the past winter, he had gone out and hired a man to take care of the furnace, after a seven-years' losing struggle with it. She had an admirable memory, and often as she had related the story, she never dropped a word of it. Even now, in the late summer, she could hardly tell it for laughing.

When they were first married, Mr. Wheelock had lent himself to the fun. He had even posed as being more inefficient than he really was, to make the joke better. But he had tired of his helplessness, as a topic of conversation. All the men of Mrs. Wheelock's acquaintance, her cousins, her brother-in-law, the boys she went to high school with, the neighbors' husbands, were adepts at putting up a shelf, at repairing a lock, or making a shirtwaist box. Mr. Wheelock had begun to feel that there was something rather effeminate about his lack of interest in such things.

He had wanted to answer his wife, lately, when she enlivened some neighbor's dinner table with tales of his inadequacy with hammer and wrench. He had wanted to cry, "All right, suppose I'm not any good at things like that. What of it?"

He had played with the idea, had tried to imagine how his voice would sound, uttering the words. But he could think of no further

* This is one of the earliest and hitherto unpublished examples of the special art Mrs. Parker has made her unique contribution to the literature of one period.

argument for his case than that "What of it?" And he was a little relieved, somehow, at being able to find nothing stronger. It made it reassuringly impossible to go through with the plan of answering his wife's public raileries.

Mrs. Wheelock sat, now, on the spotless porch of the neat stucco house. Beside her was a pile of her husband's shirts and drawers, the price-tags still on them. She was going over all the buttons before he wore the garments, sewing them on more firmly Mrs. Wheelock never waited for a button to come off, before sewing it on. She worked with quick, decided movements, compressing her lips each time the thread made a slight resistance to her deft jerks.

She was not a tall woman, and since the birth of her child she had gone over from a delicate plumpness to a settled stockiness. Her brown hair, though abundant, grew in an uncertain line about her forehead. It was her habit to put it up in curlers at night, but the crimps never came out in the right place. It was arranged with perfect neatness, yet it suggested that it had been done up and got over with as quickly as possible. Passionately clean, she was always redolent of the germicidal soap she used so vigorously. She was wont to tell people, somewhat redundantly, that she never employed any sort of cosmetics. She had unlimited contempt for women who sought to reduce their weight by dieting, cutting from their menus such nourishing items as cream and puddings and cereals.

Adelaide Wheelock's friends—and she had many of them—said of her that there was no nonsense about her. They and she regarded it as a compliment.

Sister, the Wheelocks' five-year-old daughter, played quietly in the gravel path that divided the tiny lawn. She had been known as Sister since her birth, and her mother still laid plans for a brother for her. Sister's baby carriage stood waiting in the cellar, her baby clothes were stacked expectantly away in bureau drawers. But raises were infrequent at the advertising agency where Mr. Wheelock was employed, and his present salary had barely caught up to the cost of their living. They could not conscientiously regard themselves as being able to afford a son. Both Mr. and Mrs. Wheelock keenly felt his guilt in keeping the bassinet empty.

Sister was not a pretty child, though her features were straight, and her eyes would one day be handsome. The left one turned slightly in toward the nose, now, when she looked in a certain direction, they

would operate as soon as she was seven. Her hair was pale and limp, and her color bad. She was a delicate little girl. Not fragile in a picturesque way, but the kind of child that must be always undergoing treatment for its teeth and its throat and obscure things in its nose. She had lately had her adenoids removed, and she was still using squares of surgical gauze instead of handkerchiefs. Both she and her mother somehow felt that these gave her a sort of prestige.

She was additionally handicapped by her frocks, which her mother bought a size or so too large, with a view to Sister's growing into them—an expectation which seemed never to be realized, for her skirts were always too long, and the shoulders of her little dresses came half-way down to her thin elbows. Yet, even discounting the unfortunate way she was dressed, you could tell, in some way, that she was never going to wear any kind of clothes well.

Mr. Wheelock glanced at her now and then as he clipped. He had never felt any fierce thrills of father-love for the child. He had been disappointed in her when she was a pale large-headed baby, smelling of stale milk and warm rubber. Sister made him feel ill at ease, vaguely irritated him. He had had no share in her training; Mrs. Wheelock was so competent a parent that she took the places of both of them. When Sister came to him to ask his permission to do something, he always told her to wait and ask her mother about it.

He regarded himself as having the usual paternal affection for his daughter. There were times, indeed, when she had tugged sharply at his heart—when he had waited in the corridor outside the operating room; when she was still under the anesthetic, and lay little and white and helpless on her high hospital bed; once when he had accidentally closed a door upon her thumb. But from the first he had nearly acknowledged to himself that he did not like Sister as a person.

Sister was not a whining child, despite her poor health. She had always been sensible and well-mannered, amenable about talking to visitors, rigorously unselfish. She never got into trouble, like other children. She did not care much for other children. She had heard herself described as being "old-fashioned," and she knew she was delicate, and she felt that these attributes rather set her above them. Besides, they were rough and careless of their bodily well-being.

Sister was exquisitely cautious of her safety. Grass, she knew, was often apt to be damp in the late afternoon, so she was careful now to stay right in the middle of the gravel path, sitting on a folded news-

paper and playing one of her mysterious games with three petunias that she had been allowed to pick. Mrs. Wheelock never had to speak to her twice about keeping off wet grass, or wearing her rubbers, or putting on her jacket if a breeze sprang up. Sister was an immediately obedient child, always.

II

Mrs. Wheelock looked up from her sewing and spoke to her husband. Her voice was high and clear, resolutely good-humored. From her habit of calling instructions from her upstairs window to Sister playing on the porch below, she spoke always a little louder than was necessary.

"Daddy," she said.

She had called him Daddy since some eight months before Sister was born. She and the child had the same trick of calling his name and then waiting until he signified that he was attending before they went on with what they wanted to say.

Mr. Wheelock stopped clipping, straightened himself and turned toward her.

"Daddy," she went on, thus reassured, "I saw Mr. Ince down at the post office today when Sister and I went down to get the ten o'clock mail—there wasn't much, just a card for me from Grace Williams from that place they go to up on Cape Cod, and an advertisement from some department store or other about their summer fur sale (as if I cared!), and a circular for you from the bank, I opened it; I knew you wouldn't mind.

"Anyway, I just thought I'd tackle Mr. Ince first as last about getting in our cordwood. He didn't see me at first—though I'll bet he really saw me and pretended not to—but I ran right after him. 'Oh, Mr. Ince!' I said. 'Why, hello, Mrs. Wheelock,' he said, and then he asked for you, and I told him you were finely, and everything. Then I said, 'Now, Mr. Ince,' I said, 'how about getting in that cordwood of ours!' And he said, 'Well, Mrs. Wheelock,' he said, 'I'll get it in soon's I can, but I'm short of help right now,' he said.

"Short of help! Of course I couldn't say anything, but I guess he could tell from the way I looked at him how much I believed it. I just said, 'All right, Mr. Ince, but don't you forget us. There may be a cold snap coming on,' I said, 'and we'll be wanting a fire in the living-room. Don't you forget us,' I said, and he said, no, he wouldn't.

"If that wood isn't here by Monday, I think you ought to do some-

thing about it, Daddy. There's no sense in all this putting it off, and putting it off. First thing you know there'll be a cold snap coming on, and we'll be wanting a fire in the living-room, and there we'll be! You'll be sure and 'tend to it, won't you, Daddy? I'll remind you again Monday, if I can think of it, but there are so many things!"

Mr. Wheelock nodded and turned back to his clipping—and his thoughts. They were thoughts that had occupied much of his leisure lately. After dinner, when Adelaide was sewing or arguing with the maid, he found himself letting his magazine fall face downward on his knee, while he rolled the same idea round and round in his mind. He had got so that he looked forward, through the day, to losing himself in it. He had rather welcomed the hedge-clipping, you can clip and think at the same time.

It had started with a story that he had picked up somewhere. He couldn't recall whether he had heard it or had read it—that was probably it, he thought, he had run across it in the back pages of some comic paper that someone had left on the train.

It was about a man who lived in a suburb. Every morning he had gone to the city on the 8:12, sitting in the same seat in the same car, and every evening he had gone home to his wife on the 5:17, sitting in the same seat in the same car. He had done this for twenty years of his life. And then one night he didn't come home. He never went back to his office any more. He just never turned up again.

The last man to see him was the conductor on the 5:17.

"He come down the platform at the Grand Central," the man reported, "just like he done every night since I been working on this road. He put one foot on the step, and then he stopped sudden, and he said 'Oh, hell,' and he took his foot off of the step and walked away. And that's the last anybody see of him."

Curious how that story took hold of Mr. Wheelock's fancy. He had started thinking of it as a mildly humorous anecdote, he had come to accept it as fact. He did not think the man's sitting in the same seat in the same car need have been stressed so much. That seemed unimportant. He thought long about the man's wife, wondered what suburb he had lived in. He loved to play with the thing, to try to feel what the man felt before he took his foot off the car's step. He never concerned himself with speculations as to where the man had disappeared, how he had spent the rest of his life. Mr. Wheelock was absorbed in that moment when he had said, "Oh, hell," and walked off. "Oh, hell,"

seemed to Mr. Wheelock a fine thing for him to have said, a perfect summary of the situation.

He tried thinking of himself in the man's place. But no, he would have done it from the other end. That was the real way to do it.

Some summer evening like this, say, when Adelaide was sewing on buttons, up on the porch, and Sister was playing somewhere about. A pleasant, quiet evening it must be, with the shadows lying long on the street that led from their house to the station. He would put down the garden shears, or the hose, or whatever he happened to be puttering with—not throw the thing down, you know, just put it quietly aside—and walk out of the gate and down the street, and that would be the last they'd see of him. He would time it so that he'd just make the 6:03 for the city comfortably.

He did not go ahead with it from there, much. He was not especially anxious to leave the advertising agency forever. He did not particularly dislike his work. He had been an advertising solicitor since he had gone to work at all, and he worked hard at his job and, aside from that, didn't think about it much one way or the other.

It seemed to Mr. Wheelock that before he had got hold of the "Oh, hell" story he had never thought about anything much, one way or the other. But he would have to disappear from the office, too, that was certain. It would spoil everything to turn up there again. He thought dimly of taking a train going West, after the 6:03 got him to the Grand Central Terminal—he might go to Buffalo, say, or perhaps Chicago. Better just let that part take care of itself and go back to dwell on the moment when it would sweep over him that he was going to do it, when he would put down the shears and walk out the gate—

The "Oh, hell" rather troubled him. Mr. Wheelock felt that he would like to retain that; it completed the gesture so beautifully. But he didn't quite know to whom he should say it.

He might stop in at the post office on his way to the station and say it to the postmaster; but the postmaster would probably think he was only annoyed at there being no mail for him. Nor would the conductor of the 6:03, a train Mr. Wheelock never used, take the right interest in it. Of course the real thing to do would be to say it to Adelaide just before he laid down the shears. But somehow Mr. Wheelock could not make that scene come very clear in his imagination.

III

"Daddy," Mrs. Wheelock said briskly.

He stopped clipping, and faced her.

"Daddy," she related, "I saw Doctor Mann's automobile going by the house this morning—he was going to have a look at Mr. Warren, his rheumatism's getting along nicely—and I called him in a minute, to look us over."

She screwed up her face, winked, and nodded vehemently several times in the direction of the absorbed Sister, to indicate that she was the subject of the discourse.

"He said, we were going ahead finely," she resumed, when she was sure that he had caught the idea. "Said there was no need for those t-o-n-s-i-l-s to c-o-m-e o-u-t. But I thought, soon's it gets a little cooler, some time next month, we'd just run in to the city and let Doctor Sturges have a look at us. I'd rather be on the safe side."

"But Doctor Lytton said it wasn't necessary, and those doctors at the hospital, and now Doctor Mann, that's known her since she was a baby," suggested Mr. Wheelock.

"I know, I know," replied his wife. "But I'd rather be on the safe side."

Mr. Wheelock went back to his hedge.

Oh, of course he couldn't do it; he never seriously thought he could, for a minute. Of course he couldn't. He wouldn't have the shadow of an excuse for doing it. Adelaide was a sterling woman, an utterly faithful wife, an almost slavish mother. She ran his house economically and efficiently. She harried the suburban trades people into giving them dependable service, drilled the succession of poorly paid, poorly trained maids, cheerfully did the thousand fussy little things that go with the running of a house. She looked after his clothes, gave him medicine when she thought he needed it, oversaw the preparation of every meal that was set before him; they were not especially inspirational meals, but the food was always nourishing and, as a general thing, fairly well cooked. She never lost her temper, she was never depressed, never ill.

Not the shadow of an excuse. People would know that, and so they would invent an excuse for him. They would say there must be another woman.

Mr. Wheelock frowned, and snipped at an obstinate young twig. Good Lord, the last thing he wanted was another woman. What he wanted was that moment when he realized he could do it, when he would lay down the shears—

Oh, of course he couldn't; he knew that as well as anybody. What would they do, Adelaide and Sister? The house wasn't even paid for yet, and there would be that operation on Sister's eye in a couple of years. But the house would be all paid up by next March. And there was always that well-to-do brother-in-law of Adelaide's, the one who, for all his means, put up every shelf in that great big house with his own hands.

Decent people didn't just go away and leave their wives and families that way. All right, suppose you weren't decent; what of it? Here was Adelaide planning what she was going to do when it got a little cooler, next month. She was always planning ahead, always confident that things would go on just the same. Naturally, Mr. Wheelock realized that he couldn't do it, as well as the next one. But there was no harm in fooling around with the idea. Would you say the "Oh, hell" now, before you laid down the shears, or right after? How would it be to turn at the gate and say it?

Mr. and Mrs. Fred Coles came down the street arm-in-arm, from their neat stucco house on the corner.

"See they've got you working hard, eh?" cried Mr. Coles genially, as they paused abreast of the hedge.

Mr. Wheelock laughed politely, marking time for an answer.

"That's right," he evolved.

Mrs. Wheelock looked up from her work, shading her eyes with her thimble hand against the long rays of the low sun.

"Yes, we finally got Daddy to do a little work," she called brightly. "But Sister and I are staying right here to watch over him, for fear he might cut his little self with the shears."

There was general laughter, in which Sister joined. She had risen punctiliously at the approach of the older people, and she was looking politely at their eyes, as she had been taught.

"And how is my great big girl?" asked Mrs. Coles, gazing fondly at the child.

"Oh, much better," Mrs. Wheelock answered for her. "Doctor Mann says we are going ahead finely. I saw his automobile passing the house this morning—he was going to see Mr. Warren, his rheumatism's coming along nicely—and I called him in a minute to look us over."

She did the wink and the nods, at Sister's back. Mr. and Mrs. Coles nodded shrewdly back at her.

"He said there's no need for those t-o-n-s-i-l-s to c-o-m-e o-u-t," Mrs. Wheelock called. "But I thought, soon's it gets a little cooler,

some time next month, we'd just run in to the city and let Doctor Sturges have a look at us. I was telling Daddy, 'I'd rather be on the safe side,' I said."

"Yes, it's better to be on the safe side," agreed Mrs. Coles, and her husband nodded again, sagely this time. She took his arm, and they moved slowly off.

"Been a lovely day, hasn't it?" she said over her shoulder, fearful of having left too abruptly. "Fred and I are taking a little constitutional before supper."

"Oh, taking a little constitutional?" cried Mrs. Wheelock, laughing.

Mrs. Coles laughed also, three or four bars.

"Yes, just taking a little constitutional before supper," she called back.

Sister, weary of her game, mounted the porch, whimpering a little. Mrs. Wheelock put aside her sewing, and took the tired child in her lap. The sun's last rays touched her brown hair, making it a shimmering gold. Her small, sharp face, the thick lines of her figure were in shadow as she bent over the little girl. Sister's head was hidden on her mother's shoulder, the folds of her rumpled white frock followed her limp, relaxed little body.

The lovely light was kind to the cheap, hurriedly built stucco house, to the clean gravel path, and the bits of closely cut lawn. It was gracious, too, to Mr. Wheelock's tall, lean figure as he bent to work on the last few inches of unclipped hedge.

Twenty years, he thought. The man in the story went through with it for twenty years. He must have been a man along around forty-five, most likely. Mr. Wheelock was thirty-seven. Eight years. It's a long time, eight years is. You could easily get so you could say that final "Oh, hell," even to Adelaide, in eight years. It probably wouldn't take more than four for you to know that you could do it. No, not more than two. . . .

Mrs. Coles paused at the corner of the street and looked back at the Wheelock's house. The last of the light lingered on the mother and child group on the porch, gently touched the tall, white-clad figure of the husband and father as he went up to them, his work done.

Mrs. Coles was a large, soft woman, barren, and addicted to sentiment.

"Look, Fred; just turn around and look at that," she said to her husband. She looked again, sighing luxuriously. "Such a pretty little picture!"

THE MORALS OF THE MORMONS

by Louis Sherwin

"I BELIEVE in immorality, but I don't hold with polygamy," said an actor noted as a wag, apropos of a very silly play about Salt Lake City that ran its arduous course a few seasons ago. I quote his remark because it was the first anti-Mormon speech I had ever heard that put the case honestly and without hypocrisy. For the one lesson to be learned from the morals of Salt Lake City is that polygamy and immorality are quite incompatible. The man with five wives behaves himself with exemplary propriety. It is the man with only one who spends all his spare hours looking for the five he has not.

The truth about Salt Lake City has seldom been told. It is, as I shall show, that the morals of the Mormons are vastly superior to those of the people who make a profession and pastime of attacking them—that practically all the scandals that have burst in Utah were among the latter. The first of these that I encountered was in full bloom when I was a tenderfoot in Salt Lake. Arthur Brown, a former United States Senator, a carpetbagging politician from the Presbyterian Middle West, was arrested on a charge of adultery with a certain Mrs. X. I remember seeing Mrs. Brown in the police court, a vindictive, leathern-faced virago. She had been governess to the children of Arthur Brown's first wife, had stolen Brown from Mrs. Brown Number One and brought him to Utah after the divorce. Then she learned and never got over the fact that stealing a man from his wife is quite a different matter from keeping him stolen. Mrs. X. subsequently killed the ex-Senator in the lobby of the Washington Hotel because he had refused to marry her after his second divorce and legitimize her child. Mrs. Brown Number Two died, of a broken heart, 'twas said. Not one of these people were Mormons!

There is no town in America concerning which more nonsense has been written and shouted than poor Salt Lake City. Not even New York. Its inhabitants have been attacked from every possible variety of motive. Sectarian bigotry, pharisaism, political chicanery, even sheer blackmail, the malice of the apostate, and the needs of the hired smuthound have all contributed to the bouillabaisse of flubdub that

has been poured out upon the hapless state of Utah,—hapless and defenceless since it has no more sense of humor than the rest of America.

Because a few fanatical yokels have openly taken unto themselves harems declaring that it was the will of God, Salt Lake City has been described as the seat of "a moral menace and a threat to the whiteness of womanhood." Really, this statement was made in all seriousness. The whiteness of my female relations in New York threatened because a couple of hundred dowdy old citizens indulge their polygamous instincts *coram publico* in the name of religion instead of doing it surreptitiously in the name of joy!

Nearly everybody who goes to Utah for the first time has his head stuffed with atrocious tales. To this day there are several persons in America whose sole means of earning a livelihood is to travel around the country telling seductively dark and horrible stories of innocent virgins dragged into polygamy by the hair of their heads, of weeping wives and the awful fate that befalls the children of plural marriages. Now, of course this is a fascinating picture, a dainty dish to set before King Demos, just the sort of dish he likes. The only unfortunate thing about it, O Best Beloved, is that it is all moonshine, *blague*, *scioccheria*, *reiner Unsinn*! Let me explain the Mormons as I found them in their own lairs.

But before I go any further, let me hasten to forestall the inevitable accusations of prejudice by adding that I do not happen to be a Mormon. That, however, is a mere accident of birth. Neither have I any close Mormon friends. Socially, I found most of them uncongenial because their habits are too puritanical. But I have lived among them, worked among them—worked, as a matter of fact, on the *Salt Lake Tribune*, which is famous as the principal anti-Mormon newspaper. The truth is that I found the Mormons so superior in honesty, truthfulness, sobriety and thrift to the rabble of thick-skulled bigots, spiteful apostles and political carpetbaggers who have persecuted them that the comparison is really ludicrous. The propaganda against them is hopelessly tainted with the evil motives of either political dishonesty or bigotry. The Mormons are not only more prosperous and more contented—there are no slums in Salt Lake City—but better behaved than their neighbors. They have, to be sure, the un-American fault of minding their own business. But their wives, judging not only by what they say themselves, but by the records of the divorce courts, are more contented than those of the Gentiles.

II

I am not betraying any cabinet secrets obtained as a reporter on the *Tribune*. I have no confidences to violate. What I observed can be observed by any man whose eyes are not sealed by preconceived judgments or religious prejudice. What I am going to tell is common knowledge in the town to Mormon and Gentile alike. (Whenever the word Gentile is used here it means a person who does not belong to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, as they call themselves with their delightful naiveté.) But the truth about Mormonism seldom or never escapes from Utah. Thanks to the stupidity of the hysterical sisterhoods, the people of America have been fed on a potpourri of lurid rumble-bumble on a par with the police gazette fiction that a few years ago was ladled out in the guise of White Slave Traffic investigations. The only really intelligent accounts of this curious corner of America are Murray Schick's "Mormon and Mammon"—which was published in a periodical that has since perished—and "The Latter Day Saints" by Ruth and Reginald Wright Kauffman, which was published in London.

I have been in the midst of the crowd whose business it was to stir up this disingenuous agitation. I know the motives of the whole camarilla: of the erudite millionaire miner and newspaper owner who became the angel of the agitation because they would not let him return to the Senate and convulse that august body by alluding to the poor Filipinos as "Filliponies"; of the other politician, a renegade Mormon who was discredited by his own people and forced to earn his livelihood by attacking them; of the hired investigator and press agent who kept the turmoil alive because he too, thought he had to live, in spite of what Voltaire said to the contrary; of the flannel-mouthed Protestant bonzes to whom the pastime of baiting Mormons was also the only means of concealing their flagrant intellectual ineptitude from even the most patient congregations.

The first glimmer of insight I had into this question of Mormon vs. Gentile morals came to me in rather amusing fashion. I went to Salt Lake City, with pretty much the same legends in my head that every tenderfoot took with him. For several days I observed with curiosity and amazement a chemist's shop on one of the most crowded corners of the town. In this shop was what purported to be a soda fountain, but was actually a bar for school girls. Of course the young virgins would never have dared to patronize the back rooms of saloons. At

that date—fourteen years ago—it was not considered respectable in Salt Lake City for them even to be seen in the restaurant where drinks were served. But a *jeune fille* sipping a highball at a soda fountain apparently was a more respectable figure than a *jeune fille* sipping a highball in a café—probably because the whiskey at the soda fountain was so much worse.

To me, fresh from England, it was a most interesting spectacle. Here were the daughters of the bourgeoisie sitting up on stools like cocottes at the bar of the Empire Theatre in London. It is hardly necessary to add that the inevitable happened. The ubiquitous drummer was almost as conspicuous at this bar as the bartenders. There was nothing rowdy about the place, but anybody can imagine what the influence of such surroundings was on school girls. I took it for granted that this was a symptom of the famous Mormon wickedness I had heard about. One day I said as much to an acquaintance.

"Bless your simple heart, no," he said scornfully. "Them ain't no Mormon girls. The Mormons ain't allowed to drink no liquor."

"What? Go on! Why, that's just like the Methodists."

"Sure. Ain't you never heard o' the Word of Wisdom?"

Then I learned that the Word of Wisdom forbade the Latter Day Saints not only alcohol, but tea, coffee, and tobacco. So I began to wonder about the truth of the legends I had been filled up on.

The sequel to this drug-store episode was still more illuminating. One afternoon a couple of young Mormon girls visited the famous soda fountain with some Gentile schoolmates, and acquired there an exaltation that had nothing whatever to do with religious frenzy, similar though its manifestations were. Then the Mormon members of the city council arose indignantly and said unkind things about the drug store. Nobody had said a word about it before, although the thing was well known and the saloon keepers had protested and demanded that the druggist cease debauching the innocent maidens of the town, or at least be compelled to pay as much for his license as a saloon keeper.

Subsequently I learned a few more facts about the Mormons. That the social evil—as we euphemistically call it to flatter our precious sensibilities—did not exist in Salt Lake City until the Gentiles came there in sufficient numbers to make it profitable. That the saloon keepers were all Gentiles. That of the people arrested in Utah only one-eighth were Mormons. That for thrift and industry they were exemplary. That even in the days when polygamy was practiced openly,

only ten per cent. of the Mormons indulged in it. That the divorce cases which cluttered up the court calendars were brought by Gentiles, as a Mormon was then the rarest of *raree aves* in any law court, most of all the divorce court. That in the days when other frontier towns were never free from disorder, Salt Lake City was kept quiet, not by sheriffs or marshals, but by texts. Brigham Young, one of the few great administrators this land of glistening mediocrities has seen, handed down the advice to his successors that he had found a passage from the Scriptures more effective than a platoon of police.

III

While we are on this subject of polygamy let us understand it rationally and not sentimentally. Polygamy is dying today for purely economic reasons. Of course a few of the more prosperous brethren are still taking plural wives, just as their more prosperous Gentile fellow citizens are taking mistresses. But such cases are purely sporadic. A plurality of wives today is a luxury. The Salt Lake *Tribune* a few years ago professed to know of 224 polygamous marriages that had taken place since the compact with the Federal Government by which Utah was admitted to statehood. Now, admitting that this may be true, there are between 400,000 and 500,000 Mormons in those parts. In how many other communities of 400,000 people could you find as few as 224, or even 2,240 men, who had taken mistresses?

This polygamy question is undoubtedly settling itself. Just as economic conditions are killing it, so economic conditions, and not profligacy alone, created it. Brigham Young said to Senator Trumbull years ago: "Polygamy was adopted by us as a necessity after we came here." Any intelligent man will see at once that it stands to reason, in view of the struggle for existence the Mormon pioneers had to face. The fertile Salt Lake Valley that you see from the back of the observation car today was once a bleak, sage brush and alkali desert. The more robust wives and children a man had, the more land he could cultivate. Hired labor was prohibitively expensive. The cheapest thing to do was to marry it and breed it. For, naturally, Mormonism was recruited mainly from the peasant classes of Europe. The religion appealed chiefly to the most illiterate. Far be it from me to discuss the question whether it was invented by a drunken Baptist clergyman from a novel written by a drunken Presbyterian clergyman. You will find an abundance of weary theological discussions about it, embalmed in

numerous books which he who runs may read. Burton, the greatest genius of his type since Ulysses returned to Penelope, who knew men and cities under every sky, describes Mormonism as an eclectic mixture of Semitic Monotheism, Persian Dualism, and the triads and trinities of the Egyptians and Hindus, combined with flavorings of Freemasonry, Methodism, Swedenborgianism and Transcendentalism. I have also detected traces of Aztec mythology. To me it has always suggested a collaboration between Moses, St. Paul and Rider Haggard. It appealed, therefore, chiefly to European hinds whose wives took manual labor in the fields as a matter of course.

Now, talking about wives, let us for a moment consider the ingenious superstition that a plural wife must necessarily be miserable. It is based on the lusty and, I suppose, imperishable myth that jealousy is a feminine characteristic. I used to cherish it myself until one day a clever woman could no longer restrain her impatience at my stupidity.

"How fatuous you men are to believe that women are jealous!" she exclaimed. "Not one in 500 know what jealousy really feels like. Can't you see through the bluff?"

"Why, no, I can't," said I, "how do you account for the fury of a woman whose husband is taken away from her?"

"Because if you take away a woman's husband you take away her livelihood, stupid!"

"But why all the gestures of jealousy?" I asked again.

"Because men expect it of them," she replied: "It flatters a man to think that the woman he loves can not bear to share him with another woman. But any woman of sense would rather have a third share in a first-rate man than the undivided love of a third-rater."

Not the least curious thing about this conversation is that it took place before the publication of Bernard Shaw's preface to "Getting Married." Therein he says: "The woman whose instincts are maternal, who desires superior children more than anything else, never hesitates. She would take a thousandth share, if necessary, in a husband who was a man in a thousand, rather than have some comparatively weedy weakling all to herself."

I have met several plural wives. So far from being the Latter Day Martyrs pictured by the uplift magazines they were as cheery souls as I ever met in dowdy clothing. And they were just about as ashamed of their status as a man is of a raise in salary. Julian Street has told of his meeting one of the Mrs. Joseph F. Smiths, whom he describes as a

comfortable, cheerful, motherly soul. Mr. Street asked the Prophet, Seer and Revelator, how many children and grandchildren he had.

"Let me see," said the Prophet, "over a hundred, I should say."

"Oh, more than that," protested Mrs. Smith eagerly: "why, I'm the mother of eleven and I have had 32 grandchildren in the last twelve years."

"Surely you have 110, father," urged one of the sons, proudly.

"Perhaps, perhaps," replied the Prophet, stroking his long gray beard with a benign smile.

"I beat you, though!" exclaimed C. W. Penrose, one of the presidency of the church and editor of the *Deseret Evening News*, beaming proudly.

"I don't know about that," argued young Smith. "If Father would count up I think you'd find he was ahead."

"How many have you?" asked the prophet turning to Penrose.

"One hundred and twenty odd," replied Penrose, the veins in his lean, New-England-deacon face almost bursting with self-satisfaction.

"Well, you may be ahead now, but give us time, give us time," said Mrs. Smith.

I visited the house of a polygamist one afternoon and saw a large photograph on the wall showing a group of men in convicts' striped clothes. Being short-sighted I crossed the room to look at it closely. To my intense embarrassment I observed that the features of the most prominent figure in the group resembled those of my host. But there was no embarrassment about my hostess.

"I see you're looking at that photograph," she said kindly.

"Why er—yes—hhrumph—ahem," I stuttered, feeling as sad an ass as William Jennings Bryan ought to feel.

"Why that's the first bunch of 'cohabs' that went to the Pen. and there"—pointing to the central figure—"is Mr. M—" Mr. M.—being the host. Her pride was unsurpassed by that of an early Christian martyr. By "cohabs" she meant men guilty of unlawful cohabitation.

Madeleine Zabriskie Doty tells of a plural wife whom she rather unwillingly perceived to be quite contented with her lot. She evidently expected to find her an exception and asked:

"Now tell me candidly, aren't there plural wives who are unhappy?"

"Of course there are," replied the Mormon woman: "aren't there single wives who are unhappy?"

The answer to her question is to be found in the records of any divorce court.

IV

Now, I am not making any special plea for polygamy. As an institution it simply won't work any more. I am simply representing the facts because the picture of Salt Lake life that has been drawn from distorted half truths is too preposterous. Here are some more actualities to be considered:

1. I never yet saw the child of a polygamist that was not a lusty creature, bursting with health. Ill-favored, shark-mouthed, pig-eared farmers as were the old-time Mormons (vide Kipling's description of them), the younger generation is remarkable for its high percentage of comely youths and maidens.

2. A polygamous Mormon always supports his wives and children. A Gentile may have as many unpaid mistresses as he can persuade and leave their children to charity.

3. The plural wives who have sued for a divorce are very few.

Polygamy, however, is now a dying issue. It is revived from time to time by the attacks that are periodically made upon the church. Senator Kearns and the *Tribune* did more to encourage polygamy by attacking the Mormons than a regiment of Apostles equipped with a library of revelations. After the Senate inquiry into the Smoot case several people were driven into plural marriages solely through the religious ecstasy superinduced by phantoms of persecution.

The conditions that made polygamy profitable once upon a time no longer exist. Salt Lake City today is the most cosmopolitan city of its size in America. Wives, today, are liabilities rather than assets, just as they are in Philadelphia or Joplin, Mo. So it is none too easy for the young Mormon to support one wife, let alone six, although the Church strives to maintain its cardinal principle of encouraging its members to marry early if not often.

At any rate, you can see the absurdity of such hectic visions as that of the late Alfred Henry Lewis, who never allowed facts to interfere with his conviction. He wrote a piece about Mormonism called "The Viper's Trail." In all seriousness he drew a picture of a Mormon Empire overrunning the entire United States with polygamy and levying tithes from San Diego to Salem. As Murray Schick pointed out, this vision is on a par with the amateur poultry raiser's estimate of a world overrun with chickens. The fact is that the younger generation of Mormons are to a large extent Mormons simply in name. All of them are supposed to contribute a tenth of their income as tithes. Thousands

of them never pay their tithes at all. And the bishops loudly complain in the Tabernacle that still more of the brethren are guilty of "holding out on the Lord" by interpreting ten per cent. in their own peculiar way.

Personally I found the Mormons, for the most part dull, dowdy, provincial, sanctimonious and full of pious cant. On the other hand they practice their piety to the extent of being honest, frugal and sober. An instance of their honesty is worth repeating. A Mormon and a Gentile had taken up a piece of land in partnership, and had agreed to record the deed in the names of both. After a while the Gentile discovered that the Mormon had recorded it in his own name. He complained to the Mormon's bishop. (The Saints endeavor to avoid litigation among themselves by arbitrating all such disputes before informal ecclesiastical courts. The results are said to be on the whole satisfactory, saving time and expense.) The Bishop decided in favor of the Gentile. The Mormon appealed to higher church authorities, who upheld the Bishop. The Mormon was obstinate, however, so the Bishop excommunicated with him these words: "Legally you have the power to retain the property and we have no right to interfere. But, morally, to retain it is theft. As an individual you are committing a dishonest act and for it you are barred from the church communion." This excommunicate has since become a loud-mouthed accession to the anti-Mormon propaganda.

The fantastic politics of Utah are inextricably mixed up with the history of its morals. The Mormons, you see, have always been a clannish lot. They settled a barren wilderness. They turned sage brush deserts into corn and alfalfa fields. They made peach trees flourish where nothing more useful than the juniper or cotton tree used to grow. And they have the peculiar idea that they themselves should be the chief beneficiaries of their own and their fathers' industry. They look upon the Gentiles as interlopers and carpetbaggers, as I am afraid only too many of them are. At least two former United States Senators can be so described with complete accuracy.

For many years Gentile merchants experienced much difficulty in getting the Mormon trade, still greater difficulty in obtaining political offices. They could not do anything about it, as they were for a long time outnumbered. It was useless to whine about this to the rest of the

country. Presbyterians in Salt Lake City could not expect much sympathy from Presbyterians in Indiana, say, on the ground that Mormons preferred to deal with Mormon stores and vote for Mormon sheriffs. The Indiana Presbyterians would have replied that they had troubles of their own, since Methodists have a way of buying groceries from Methodists, and Baptists from Baptist grocers the world over, wherever their dreary creeds are found. So in their impotent fury the Salt Lake Gentiles dug up the old animosity and the old charge—polygamy. As I said before, never at any time were more than ten per cent. of the Mormon population polygamists. And they never hurt the Gentiles, never attempted to seduce Gentile maidens into plural marriages. Nevertheless the Gentile peddlers lifted up their voices and howled to the rest of the country: "These wicked people are polygamists—come over and save your Christian brethren from their clutches."

The Church consequently became a target for blackmail by the big political parties. It is an ugly word but it is literally true. Whenever the party treasury needed money—and that was nearly always—a more or less suave envoy was sent to Salt Lake City to explain to the heads of the Church that from all over the country pressure was being brought to bear on Washington to have Utah reduced to the rank of a territory again in order that Federal officers from Washington might be sent out to suppress polygamy. But, of course, if the Church, which was notoriously rich, cared to contribute to the party's funds the party would be enabled to counteract this pressure and so forth. And the Church had a vivid recollection of the dark days of 1884, when a fire-eater named Zane from Illinois was made Chief Justice of the territory. He took with him an army of United States marshals who began scouring the territory for "cohabs" as they were called. "Cohab-hunting" became the sport of the hour. It was a pretty sight. I commend the history of this period to the attention of the Presbyterian Board of Missions, which has always contributed so freely to the anti-Mormon propaganda. "All the Gentiles in Utah aided in the sport. Women and children, bankers, merchants, reporters and all the Christian clergymen took part." The property of the Church was confiscated. It was proposed to deprive all Mormons of the vote until finally Prophet President Wilford Woodruff issued his famous manifesto ordering the brethren to abstain from polygamy.

In 1894 Utah became a State. But the blackmail, or attempts to black-

mail, never ceased. You see, although polygamy was officially abandoned, the old polygamists refused to desert their plural wives and continued to live with them. This was tacitly understood and winked at. Nevertheless it was an instrument for bludgeoning in the hands of the national political parties, who were constantly threatening an amendment to the United States constitution and a revival of the old persecutions. In 1900, the late Mark Hanna sent Perry S. Heath out to Salt Lake City to look over the ground. The State had been Democratic in 1896. It became overwhelmingly Republican in 1900. Thomas Kearns, a miner who at that time was notoriously illiterate, was elected to the Senate. One of Kearns's partners bought the Amelia Palace, which Brigham Young had built for his favorite wife, an expensive white elephant that the Church had long been trying to sell. Kearns bought the *Tribune* and made Perry Heath general manager, a position for which he was as well fitted as I would be to conduct the Boston Symphony Orchestra. The *Tribune's* attacks on the Mormons ceased. It was a beautiful love feast.

Kearns liked Washington very much and thought he was firmly fixed in his comfortable seat in the Senate. But the Church thought otherwise. It considered it had amply fulfilled its part of the bargain by giving him one term. An able man in many respects, his fund of information was confined almost entirely to mining. Utah winced loudly whenever its Senator made one of his amusing breaks in public. He became the national Malaprop.

When he discovered that he had no hopes of re-election he did what the Gentiles have always done in Utah. To put it bluntly, he "flopped," and organized the "American" party along the lines of the old fire-eating "Liberal" party, which had been disbanded when the love feast took place. Frank Cannon, former Mormon, was made editor of the *Tribune*, which revived its Mormon baiting. Cannon had a grievance himself as his career in the Senate had been cut short after one term.

The fight, then, of the "American party," was purely a local squabble for political jobs. But money was spent freely to obtain signatures to petitions from all over the States protesting against the election of Reed Smoot to the Senate. The purity and motherhood of America would be imperilled if this gawky, dowdy and eminently respectable woolen merchant were allowed to take his seat. Well, the attack failed and Smoot sat in the Senate for over ten years and yet I am informed that purity and motherhood are still rampant in many parts of our imperilled commonwealth.

I don't believe and I have never found anybody in Utah who believes that a single soul in that precious "American" party really cared a rap whether a few hundred of their fellow citizens were polygamists. The great majority of Gentiles in Salt Lake City know their Mormon neighbors for quiet, law-abiding persons. At the same time they wanted to see Gentile majorities on the city council and school board. Eventually they did win a city election. Then came the prime joke. Word was sent out to the so-called underworld all over the West that a good time was coming. Salt Lake City was to be an "open town" with all that it implies. Never were there so many scandals of corruption as during that "American" administration. Finally one day an "American" chief of police was caught red-handed sharing in the proceeds of a crime.

I have related this ancient history because, aside from its ironic features, it shows the real sources of this agitation and the motives and characters of the men responsible for it. There is, for instance, the ex-judge, another Gentile carpetbagger who told me he had found such immorality among the school children of Salt Lake City as he had never heard of elsewhere. He claimed to have cross-examined twenty boys and twenty girls from one of the schools and that eighteen of the boys and seventeen of the girls admitted some form of sexual precocity. I asked him whether they were Mormon children and he said, "No, but it is the corrupting influence of the Mormons." Well, this worthy judge one day was himself accused of having mistreated one of his delinquents, an attractive little baggage. After an investigation of this charge and also some alleged financial irregularities he left the town in a hurry.

The scandals about the Mormon baiters could fill an entire magazine. There was the prominent fire-eater, famous for his taste in painting, who after being elected to an important office hired an entire house in the red-light district for his legislative friends. There was the eminent statesman, married to one of the daughters of Salt Lake aristocracy, whom an unmarried lady declared, on the eve of his election, to be the father of her bouncing baby. The natives will know the man I mean.

An inmate of the once flourishing red-light district became suddenly wealthy, came East and managed to obtain a foothold on the New York stage for a while, being able to lend money to one or two of our best known little managers. If the name of the man whom she black-mailed were known, it would make quite a little hurricane in Gentile

circles. I still remember vividly this chaste gentleman's pious horror one afternoon when I told him I had just heard Prophet Joseph F. Smith declare in the Tabernacle, crowded with his people at a semi-annual Conference, that if he abandoned the wives he had married he would be ashamed to face his God, or words to that effect. Of the Christian clergymen who have joined in the baiting at least two, to my knowledge, have left the town under a cloud. Another, famous for his assaults on the Demon Rum in his pulpit, assailed the demon in somewhat different fashion at a banquet one night and had to be helped home.

VI

Today Salt Lake City is a very different town from the one I knew twelve years ago. Then it was a place to be avoided, as dull a nest as ever I saw. Two things have changed it: sugar and cabarets. The European war sent the price of sugar stock from \$9.00 to \$30.00 a share, creating the usual crop of overnight Croesuses. The place now boasts of two quite good hotels, whereas it used to rely upon the savage mercies of the old time "American House" abomination. A letter from a Gentile friend tells me that:

"During the past year or so the community has fallen hard for the grill-and-cabaret route to Hell. One of the leading grills has no entertainers, but is crowded nightly with 'fashionable' revelers (even elders of the Church) who dance and drink deeply of the wine that boils when it is cold. At another house, where the patrons are more cosmopolitan, regular orgies are held nightly. Even the lobby is cleared for tables and hundreds are turned away. They maintain a bunch of entertainers who dance without their Onyx hosiery and are otherwise clad just enough to escape being jailed. Hitherto staid sober citizens have to be assisted to their machines, helplessly drunk. This may sound trivial to one who has seen so much of night life in New York, but it is going some for this one-cylinder burg. Aside from its tendency to undetermine morals, my grievance against café-life is that it has been the chief cause of the rapid spread of dry territory."

Western legislatures, believing that as Oscar Wilde—whom they have never read—says: "Nothing succeeds like excess," cling to the chaste idea of curing one form of intemperance by another. To the huge disgust of the sensible citizen who is thereby prohibited from his modest bottle of Chateau La Rose (Cal.) with his Sunday dinner and the nightly Budweiser stirrup cup among his Lares and Penates.

The Mormons, although the stricter brethren avoid the Demons Rum, Nicotine and Caffeine, have always encouraged dancing. Dances are held regularly at the Ward meeting houses and are opened with prayer. But today even the Word of Wisdom is in the discard as far as the younger generation are concerned. The fact is that most of their well-to-do youngsters are Mormons only in name. As one of them, a colleague on a New York newspaper, expressed it the other day, "they are Mormons, but they aren't working at it." Indeed they are taking to Gentile dissipations more than kindly. When one-third of the people gargling the grape in the cafés are Mormons, when Mormon elders are to be seen by the side of long cold bottles, it is a sure sign that education and fox-trotting are playing hob with the Latter Day Saints. I am told that no less a prelate than the Prophet, Seer and Revelator of the Church has been seen actually playing golf for his health at the Country Club, a place which even pious Gentiles (who could not afford to belong) used to frown upon because women drank cocktails there.

Young maidens of the Salt Lake aristocracy parade Main Street in skirts that, just to be on the safe side of fashion, are a trifle shorter than any chorus girl's along Broadway. Those who have jewels believe like "Fingy" Conners, that the time to wear them is always. Even the yokels from down state who attend the semi-annual conferences in the Tabernacle wear intelligence in their faces and Fifth Avenue (Rochester) clothing on their persons.

In another respect Salt Lake City has become as modern as New York. The red-light district which flourished once with a roaring trade, especially when the legislature was in session, has ceased to exist as a district and become dispersed among the residential neighborhoods.

In short, if I were Prophet, Seer and Revelator of the Latter Day Saints, I would pray for another Diocletian persecution.

Judging from recent symptoms, nothing else will hold this curious church together. Personally, I think it is a real pity they were not allowed to carry out their interesting experiment without interference. What Burton said in 1859 is true. In the matter not only of morals, but eugenics and economics, their polity had many points of superiority to ours. Today it differs from ours only superficially. Not Gentile persecution, but Gentile friendship is breaking it up.

THE SHADOW

by Witter Bynner

A YOUNG MAN

Faintly I find your face. But I could swear
A woman hurried by us, while we smiled,
With groping hand as though to part the air,
With open breast as though to feed a child.

A YOUNG WOMAN

My eyes were closed, beloved. But your hand
Gave me the touch of her, your eyes the sight,
Till I can see her crouching in the sand—
And I shall find her hiding in the night.

THE YOUNG MAN

Why do you urge me with a touch so wild?

THE YOUNG WOMAN

A child! I hear the crying of a child!

THE SHADOW

Let me alone, I tell you! Such as I,
We want for such as you to let us be . . .
You did not see me when you two went by.
Look to a child of yours! Leave mine to me!

THE YOUNG WOMAN

Oh, tell me why she ran away so fast
Into the night again—and how she knew,
For it was very dark here when she passed,
That soon, oh, soon, I bear a child to you?

THE YOUNG MAN

Why do you pierce me with a cry so wild?

THE YOUNG WOMAN

Because that should have been our child—our child!

SOME LADIES AND JURGEN

*by James Branch Cabell**

I

IN the old days lived a poet named Jurgen; but what his wife called him was very often much much worse than that. She was a high-spirited woman, with no especial gift for silence. Well, in the old days Jurgen was passing the Cistercian Abbey, and one of the monks had tripped over a stone in the roadway. He was cursing the devil who had placed it there.

"Fie, brother!" says Jurgen, "and have not the devils enough to bear as it is?"

"I never held with Origen," replied the monk; "and, besides, it hurt my great toe confoundedly."

"None the less," observes Jurgen, "it does not behoove God-fearing persons to speak with disrespect of the divinely appointed Prince of Darkness. Then, to your further confusion, consider this monarch's industry! Day and night you may detect him toiling at the task Heaven set him. That is a thing can be said of few communicants and of no monks. Think, too, of his fine artistry, as evinced in all the perilous and lovely snares of this world, which it is your business to combat, and mine to make verses about! Why, but for him we would both be vocationless. Then, moreover, consider his philanthropy! and deliberate how insufferable would be our case if you and I, and all of us, were today hobnobbing with all other beasts in the Garden which we pretend to desiderate on Sundays! To arise with swine and lie down with the hyena?—oh, intolerable!" So he ran on, devising reasons for not thinking too harshly of the devil. Most of it was an abridgement of his own verses.

"I consider that to be stuff and nonsense," was the monk's glose.

"No doubt your notion is sensible," observed the poet; "but mine is the prettier. . . ."

Well, then Jurgen met a black gentleman, who saluted him and said:

"Thanks, Jurgen, for your good word."

"Who are you, and why do you thank me?" asks Jurgen.

* This is the short story out of which Cabell's famous novel *Jurgen* was evolved. It is instructive to compare this story with the form it took in the novel.

"My name is no great matter. But you have a kind heart, Jurgen. May your life be free from care!"

"Glory be to God, friend, but I am already married."

"Eh, sirs, and a fine, clever poet like you! No matter, the morning is brighter than the evening. Now I will reward you, to be sure."

So Jurgen thanked him politely. And when Jurgen reached home his wife was nowhere to be seen. He looked on all sides and questioned everyone, but to no avail. So he crossed himself, prepared his own supper, went to bed, and slept soundly.

"I have implicit confidence," says he, "in Lisa. I have particular confidence in her ability to take care of herself, in any surroundings."

That was all very well: but time passed, and presently it began to be rumored that Lisa walked on Morven. Her brother, who was a grocer and a member of the town council, went thither to see about this report. And sure enough, there was Jurgen's wife walking in the twilight and muttering incessantly.

"Fie, sister!" says the town counsellor, "this is very unseemly conduct for a married woman, and a thing likely to be talked about."

"Follow me!" replied Dame Lisa. And the town counsellor followed her a little way, in the dusk, but when she came to Amneran Heath and still went onward, he knew better than to follow.

Next evening the elder sister of Dame Lisa went to Morven. This sister had married a notary, and was a shrewd woman. In consequence she took with her this evening a long wand of peeled willow-wood. And there was Jurgen's wife walking in the twilight and muttering incessantly.

"Fie, sister!" says the notary's wife, who was a shrewd woman, "and do you not know that all this while Jurgen does his own sewing, and is once more making eyes at the Countess Varvara?"

Dame Lisa shuddered; but she only said, "Follow me!"

So the notary's wife followed her to Amneran Heath, and across Amneran Heath to where a cave was. This was a place of abominable repute. . . . A lean hound came to them there in the twilight, lolling his tongue: but the notary's wife struck twice with her wand, and the silent beast left them. And Lisa went silently into the cave, and her sister turned and went home to her children, weeping.

So the next evening Jurgen himself came to Morven, because all his wife's family assured him this was the manly thing to do. He followed his wife across Amneran Heath until they reached the cave. The

poet would willingly have been elsewhere. For the hound squatted upon his haunches, and seemed to grin at Jurgen: and there were other creatures abroad that flew low in the twilight, keeping close to the ground like owls; but they were larger than owls, and were more discomfoting.

Jurgen said, a little peevishly:

"Lisa, my dear, if you go into the cave I will have to follow you, because it is the manly thing to do. And you know how easily I take cold."

The voice of Lisa was as the rustle of dead leaves.

"There is a cross about your neck. You must throw that away."

And indeed, Jurgen was wearing such a cross, through motives of sentiment, because it had once belonged to his dead mother.

But now, to pleasure his wife—"I am embarking upon an apologue," was his appraisal—he removed the trinket, and hung it on a barberry bush; and with the reflection that this was likely to prove a deplorable business, he followed Lisa into the cave.

Well, all was dark there, and Jurgen could see no one. But the cave stretched straight forward, and downward, and at the far end was a glow of light.

So Jurgen went on and on, and, after divers happenings which do not here concern us, he came to a notable place where seven cresset lights were burning. These lights were the power of Assyria, and Babylon, and Nineveh, and Egypt, and Rome, and Athens, and Byzantium: and six other cressets stood ready there, but fire had not yet been laid to these. And here was the black gentleman, in a black dressing-gown that was embroidered with all the signs of the Zodiac. He sat at a table, the top of which was curiously inlaid with thirty pieces of silver: and he was copying entries from one big book into another.

"You find me busy with my accounts," says he, "which augment daily—But what more can I do for you, Jurgen?"

"I have been thinking, Prince—" begins the poet.

"And why do you call me a prince, Jurgen?"

"I do not know, sir. But I suspect you are Koschei the Deathless."

The black gentleman nodded. "Something of the sort. Koschei, or Norka, or Chudo-Yudo—it is all one what I may be called hereabouts. My real name you never heard: no man has ever heard my name. So that matter we need hardly go into."

"Precisely, Prince. And I have been thinking that my wife's society is perhaps becoming a trifle burdensome to you."

"Eh, sirs, I cannot report that I enjoy it. But I am not unaccustomed to women. I may truthfully say that as I find them, so do I take them. And I was willing to oblige a fellow rebel."

"But I do not know, Prince, that I have ever rebelled—"

"You make verses, Jurgen. And all poetry is man's rebellion against being what the creature unluckily is."

"Well, be that as it may, Prince! But I do not know that you have obliged me."

"Why, Jurgen," says the black gentleman, in high astonishment, "do you mean to tell me that you want the plague of your life back again?"

"I do not know about that, either, sir. She was certainly very hard to live with. On the other hand, I had become used to having her about. I rather miss her."

Now the black gentleman meditated.

"Come, friend," he says, at last, "you are a poet of some merit. You display a promising talent which might be cleverly developed, in any suitable environment. The trouble is"—and he lowered his voice to a whisper that was truly diabolical—"the trouble is that your wife does not understand you. She is hindering your art. Yes, that precisely sums it up: she is interfering with your soul-development, and your instinctive need of self-expression, and all that sort of thing. You are very well rid of her. To the other side, as is with point observed somewhere or other, it is not good for man to live alone. But, friend, I have just the wife for you—"

Then Koschei waved his hand; and their, quick as winking, was the loveliest lady that Jurgen had ever imagined. Fair was she to look upon, with her shining gray eyes and small, smiling lips, a fairer woman might no man boast of having seen. And she regarded Jurgen graciously, with her cheeks red and white, very lovely to observe. She was clothed in a robe of flame-colored silk, and about her neck was a collar of red gold. When she spoke her voice was music. And she told him that she was Queen Guenevere.

"But Launcelot is turned monk, at Glastonbury; and Arthur is gone into Avalon," says she: "and I will be your wife if you will have me, Messire Jurgen."

The poet was troubled.

"For you make me think myself a god," says Jurgen. "Madame Guenevere, when man recognized himself to be Heaven's vicar upon

earth, it was to serve and to glorify and to protect you and your radiant sisterhood that man consecrated his existence. You were beautiful, and you were frail; you were half goddess and half bric-a-brac. Ohimé, I recognize the call of chivalry, and my heart-strings resound: yet, for innumerable reasons, I hesitate to take you for my wife, and to concede myself your appointed protector, responsible as such to Heaven. For one matter, I am not altogether sure that I am Heaven's vicar here upon earth. I cannot but suspect that Omniscience would have selected some more competent representative."

"It is so written, Messire Jorgen."

Jorgen shrugged. "I, too, have written much that is beautiful. Very often my verses were so beautiful that I would have given anything in the world in exchange for somewhat less sure information as to the author's veracity. Ah, no, madame, desire and knowledge are pressing me so sorely that, between them, I dare not love you, and still I cannot help it."

Then Jorgen gave a little wringing gesture with his hands. His smile was not merry.

"Madame and queen," says he, "there was once a man who worshipped all women. To him they were one and all of sacred, sweet, intimidating beauty. He shaped sonorous rhymes of this, in praise of the mystery and sanctity of women. Then several ladies made much of him, because, good lack, 'he understood women.' That was very unfortunate: for more reasons than one, all poets should be kept away from petticoats. So a little by a little he began to suspect that women, also, are akin to their parents; and are no wiser, and no more subtle, and no more immaculate, than the father who begot them. Madame and queen, it is not good for any man to suspect this."

"It is certainly not the conduct of a chivalrous person, nor of an authentic poet," says Queen Guenevere. "And yet your eyes are big with tears."

"Hah, madame," he replied, "but it amuses me to weep for a dead man with eyes that once were his."

Now said Queen Guenevere:

"Farewell to you, then, Jorgen, for it is I that am leaving you forever. I was the lovely and excellent masterwork of God: in Caerleon and Northgalis and at Joyeuse Garde might men behold me with delight, because to view me was to comprehend the power and kindness of their Creator. Very beautiful was Iseult, and the face of Luned

sparkled like a moving gem; Morgaine and Viviane and shrewd Nimuë were lovely, too; and the comeliness of Ettarre exalted the beholder like proud music: these, going about Arthur's hall, seemed Heaven's finest craftsmanship until the Queen came to her dais, as the moon among glowing stars: men then affirmed that God in making Guenevere had used both hands. My beauty was no human white and red, said they, but a proud sign of Heaven's might. In approaching me, men thought of God, because in me, they said, His splendor was incarnate. That which I willed was neither right nor wrong: it was divine. This thing it was that the knights saw in me; this surety, as to the power and generosity of their great Father, it was of which the chevaliers of yesterday were conscious in beholding me, and of men's need to be worthy of such parentage: and it is I that am leaving you forever."

Said Jurgen:

"It is a sorrowful thing that is happening to me. I am become as a rudderless boat that goes from wave to wave: I am turned to unfertile dust that a windwhirl makes coherent and presently lets fall. And so farewell to you, Queen Guenevere, for it is a sorrowful thing that is happening to me."

Thus he cried farewell to the daughter of Gogyran. And instantly she vanished like the flame of a blownout altar-candle. . . .

II

Then came to Jurgen that Queen Anaitis who very long ago was the bright bane of nations. Words may not describe her loveliness. And she talked of marvelous things. Of the lore of Thaïs she spoke, and of the schooling of Sappho, and of the secrets of Rhodopë, and of the mourning for Adonis.

"For we have but a little while to live, and thereafter none knows his fate. A man possesses nothing certainly save a brief loan of his own body: and yet the body of man is capable of much curious pleasure. As thus and thus," says she.

And the bright-colored woman spoke with antique directness of matters that Jurgen found rather embarrassing.

"Come, come!" thinks he, "but it will never do to seem provincial. I believe that I am actually blushing."

Aloud he said:

"Sweetheart, there was once a youth who sought quite zealously for the overmastering frenzies you prattle about. But, candidly, he

could not find the flesh whose touch would rouse insanity. The lad had opportunities, too, let me tell you! Hah, I recall with tenderness the glitter of eyes and hair, and the gay garments, and the soft voices of those fond, foolish women, even now! But he went from one pair of lips to another, with an ardor that was always half-feigned, and with protestations that were conscious echoes of some romance or other. Such escapades were pleasant enough; but they were not very serious, after all. For these things concerned his body alone: and I am more than an edifice of viands reared by my teeth. To pretend that what my body does or endures is of importance, seems rather silly nowadays. I prefer to regard it as a necessary beast of burden which I maintain, at considerable expense and trouble. So I shall make no more pother over it."

But then again Queen Anaïtis spoke of marvelous things; and he listened, fair-mindedly, for the queen spoke of that which was hers to share with him.

"In Babylon I have a temple where many women sit with cords about them and burn bran for perfume, while they await that thing which is to befall them. In Armenia I have a temple surrounded by vast gardens, where only strangers have the right to enter: they there receive a hospitality that is more than gallant. In Paphos I have a temple wherein is a little pyramid of white stones, very curious to see: but still more curious is the statue in my temple at Amathus, of a bearded woman, which displays other features that women do not possess. And in Alexandria I have a temple that is tended by thirty-six exceedingly wise and sacred persons, and wherein it is always night: and there men seek for monstrous pleasures, even at the price of instant death, and win to both of these swiftly. Everywhere my temples stand upon high places near the sea: so they are beheld from afar by those whom I hold dearest, my beautiful broad-chested, hairy mariners, who do not fear even me, but know that in my temples they will find notable employment. For I must tell you of what is to be encountered within these places that are mine, and of how pleasantly we pass our time there."

So she told him. . . .

Now he listened more attentively than before, and his eyes were narrowed, and his lips were lax and motionless and foolish-looking.

To Jurgen this queen's voice was all a horrible and strange and lovely magic.

Then Jurgen growled and shook himself, half-angrily; and he tweaked the ear of Queen Anaïtis.

"Sweetheart," says he, "you paint a glowing picture; but you are shrewd enough to borrow your pigments from the daydreams of inexperience. What you prattle about is not at all as you describe it. Also, you forget you are talking to a married man of some years' standing. Moreover, I shudder to think of what might happen if Lisa were to walk in unexpectedly. And for the rest, you come a deal too late, my lass, so that all this to-do over nameless sins and unspeakable caresses and other anonymous antics seems rather naïve. My ears are beset by eloquent gray hairs which plead at closer quarters than does that fibbing little tongue of yours. And so be off with you."

With that Queen Anaïtis smiled very cruelly and said:

"Farewell to you, then, Jurgen, for it is I that am leaving you forever. Henceforward you must fret away much sunlight by interminably shunning discomfort and by indulging tepid preferences. For I, and none but I, can waken that desire which uses all of a man, and so wastes nothing, even though it leave that favored man forever after like wan ashes in the sunlight. And with you I have no more to do. Join with your graying fellows, then! and help them to affront the clean, sane sunlight by making guilds and laws and solemn phrases wherewith to rid the world of me! I, Anaïtis, laugh, and my heart is a wave in the sunlight. For there is no power like my power, and no living thing which can withstand my power: and those who deride me, as I well know, are but the emptied dead, dry husks that a wind moves, with hissing noises, while I harvest in open sunlight. For I am the desire that uses all of a man; and it is I that am leaving you forever."

Said Jurgen:

"Again it is a sorrowful thing that is happening to me. I am become as a puzzled ghost that furtively observes the doings of loud-voiced, ruddy persons; and I am compact of weariness and apprehension, for I no longer discern what thing is I, nor what is my desire, and I fear that I am already dead. So farewell to you, Queen Anaïtis, for this, too, is a sorrowful thing that is happening to me."

Thus he cried farewell to the Sun's daughter. And all the colors of her loveliness flickered and merged into the likeness of a tall, thin flame, that aspired; and then this flame was extinguished. . . .

III

Now silently came Queen Helen. She said nothing at all, because there was no need. But, beholding her, Jurgen kneeled. He hid his face in her white robe, and stayed thus, without speaking, for a long while.

"Lady of my vision," he said, and his voice broke, "assuredly I believe that your father was that ardent bird which nestled very long ago in Leda's bosom. And now Troy's sons are all in Hades' keeping, in the world below; fire has consumed the walls of Troy, and the years have forgotten her proud conquerors: but still you are bringing woe on woe on hapless sufferers." And again his voice broke. For the world seemed cheerless, and like a house that none has lived in for many years.

Then, with queer pride, he raised his time-lined countenance, much as a man condemned might turn to the executioner.

"Lady, if you indeed be the Swan's daughter, very long ago there was a child that was ill. And his illness turned to a fever, and in his fever he arose from his bed one night, saying that he must set out for Troy, because of his love for Queen Helen. I was once that child. I remember how strange it seemed to me that I should be talking such nonsense; I remember how the warm room smelt of drugs; and I remember how I pitied the trouble in my nurse's face, drawn and old in the yellow lamplight. For she loved me, and she did not understand; and she pleaded with me to be a good boy and not to worry my sleeping parents. But I perceive now that I was not talking nonsense. Yours is the beauty which all poets know to exist, somewhere, and which life, as men have contrived it thus far, does not anywhere afford. For that beauty I have hungered always. Toward that beauty I have struggled always, but not quite whole-heartedly. That night forecast my life. I have hungered for you; and"—he laughed here—"and I have always stayed a passably good boy, lest I should beyond reason disturb my family."

And Queen Helen, the delight of gods and men, said nothing at all, because there was no need. For the man who has once glimpsed her loveliness is beyond saving, and beyond the desire of being saved.

"Tonight," says Jurgen, "through the shrewd art of Koshchei, it appears that you stand within arm's reach. Hah, lady, were that possible—and I know very well it is not possible, whatever my senses may report—I am not fit to mate with your perfection. At the bottom of my heart I no longer desire perfection. For we that are taxpayers

as well as immortal souls must live by politic evasions and formulae and catchwords that fret away our lives as moths waste a garment: we fall insensibly to common sense as to a drug; and it dulls and kills that which in us is fine and rebellious and unreasonable: so that you will find no man of my years with whom living is not a mechanism that gnaws away time unprompted. I am become the creature of use and wont; I am the lackey of prudence and half-measures; and I have put my dreams upon an allowance. Yet even now I love you more than I love costly foods and indolence and flattery. What more can an old poet say? For that reason, lady, I pray you begone, because your loveliness is a taunt that I find unendurable."

But his voice yearned, because this was Queen Helen, the delight of gods and men, who regarded him with grave, kind eyes. She seemed to view, as one appraises the pattern of an unrolled carpet, every action of Jurgen's life: and she seemed too, to wonder, without reproach or trouble, how men could be so foolish and of their own accord become so miry.

"Oh, I have failed my vision!" cries Jurgen. "I have failed, and I know very well that every man must fail; and yet my shame is no less bitter. For I am transmuted by time's handling! I shudder at the thought of living day in and day out with my vision! And so I will have none of you for my wife."

Then, trembling, Jurgen raised toward his lips the hand of her who was the world's darling.

"And so farewell to you, Queen Helen! Oh, very often in a woman's face I have found this or that feature wherein she resembled you, and for the sake of it have served that woman blindly. And all my verses, as I know now, were vain enchantments striving to evoke that hidden loveliness of which I knew by dim report alone until tonight. Oh, all my life was a foiled quest of you, Queen Helen, who came too late. Yes, certainly, it should be graved upon my tomb, *Queen Helen ruled this earth while it stayed worthy*. . . . But that was very long ago. Today I ride no more a-questing anything: instead, I potter after hearthside comforts, and play the physician with myself, and strive painstakingly to make old bones. And no man's notion anywhere seems worth a cup of mulled wine; and for the sake of no notion would I endanger the routine which so hideously bores me. For I am transmuted by time's handling; I have become the lackey of prudence and half-measures: and so, farewell to you, Queen Helen, for I have failed in the service of my vision, and I deny you utterly!"

Thus he cried farewell to the Swan's daughter: and Queen Helen vanished as a bright mist passes, not departing swiftly as had done the other two; and Jurgen was alone with the black gentleman. . . .

IV

"Come, come!" observed Koshchei the Deathless, "but you are certainly hard to please."

Well, Jurgen was already intent to shrug off his display of emotion.

"In selecting a wife, sir," submitted Jurgen, "there are all sorts of matters to be considered. Whatever the first impulse of the moment, it was apparent to any reflective person that in the past of each of these ladies there was much to suggest inborn inaptitude for domestic life. And I am a peace-loving fellow, sir; nor do I hold with moral laxity, except, of course, in talk when it promotes sociability, and in verse-making, wherein it is esteemed as a conventional ornament. Still, Prince, the chance I lost! I do not refer to matrimony, you conceive. But in the presence of these famous fair ones with what glowing words I ought to have spoken! upon a wondrous ladder of strophes, metaphors and recondite allusions, to what stylistic heights of Asiatic prose I ought to have ascended! And instead, I twaddled like a school-master. Decidedly, Lisa is right, and I am good-for-nothing. However," he added hopefully, "it appeared to me that this evening Lisa was somewhat less outspoken than usual."

"Eh, sir, but she was under a very potent spell. I found that necessary, in the interest of law and order hereabouts. We are not accustomed to the excesses of practical persons who are ruthlessly bent upon reforming their associates. Indeed, it is one of the advantages of my situation that such folk rarely come my way." And the black gentleman in turn shrugged. "You will pardon me, but I am positively committed to help out an archbishop with some of his churchwork this evening, and there is a rather important assassination to be instigated at Vienna. So time presses. Meanwhile, you have inspected the flower of womanhood; and I cannot soberly believe that you prefer your termagant of a wife."

"Frankly, Prince, I also am, as usual, undecided. Could you let me see her, for just a moment?"

This was no sooner asked than done: for there, sure enough, was Dame Lisa. She was no longer restricted to quiet speech by any stupendous necromancy, and seemed peevisish: and uncommonly plain she looked, after the passing of those lovely ladies.

"Well, you rascal!" begins Dame Lisa, addressing Jurgen, "and so you thought to be rid of me! Oh, a precious lot you are! and a deal of thanks I get for my scrimping and slaving!" And she began scolding away. She said he was even worse than the Countess Varvara.

But rather unaccountably Jurgen fell to thinking of the years they had shared together, of the fine and merry girl that Lisa had been before she married him, and of how well she knew his tastes in cookery and all his other little preferences, and of how cleverly she humored them on those rare days when nothing had occurred to vex her and of how much more unpleasant—everything considered—life was without her than with her. And his big, foolish heart was half yearning and half penitence.

"I think I will take her back, Prince," says he, very quietly. "For I do not know but that it is as hard on her as on me."

"My friend, do you forget the poet that you might be, even yet? No rational person would dispute that the society and amiable chat of Dame Lisa is a desideratum—"

But Dame Lisa was always resentful of long words. "Be silent, you black scoffer! and do not allude to such disgraceful things in the presence of respectable people! For I am a decent Christian woman, I would have you understand. But everybody knows your reputation! and a very fit companion you are for that scamp yonder. Jurgen, I always told you you would come to this, and now I hope you are satisfied. Jurgen, do not stand there with your mouth open, like a scared fish, when I ask you a civil question! but answer when you are spoken to! and do not say a single word to me, Jurgen, because I am disgusted with you. For, Jurgen, you heard perfectly well what your very suitable friend just said about me. No, do not ask me what he said, Jurgen! I leave that to your conscience. So, if my own husband has not the feelings of a man, and cannot protect me from insults and low company, I had best be going home and getting supper ready. I daresay the house is like a pigsty. And to think of your going about in public, even among such associates, with a button off your shirt! You are enough to drive a person mad. and I warn you that I am done with you forever."

And Dame Lisa walked with dignity toward the mouth of the cave. "So you can come with me, or not, precisely as you elect. It is all one to me, I can assure you, after the cruel things you have said. But I shall stop by for a word with that high-and-mighty Varvara on the

way home. You two need never think to hoodwink me about your goings-on."

And with that Dame Lisa went away, still talking.

"Phew!" said Koshchei, in the ensuing silence; "you had better stay overnight, in any event. I really think, friend, you will be more comfortable, just now at least, with me."

But Jurgen had taken up his caftan.

"No, I daresay I had better be going too," says Jurgen. "I thank you very heartily for your intended kindness, sir, still I do not know but it is better as it is. And is there anything"—he coughed delicately—"and is there anything to pay, sir?"

"Well, not, of course, for the freedom of Dame Lisa. We very rarely molest the wives of poets. It is not considered sportsmanlike. But I must tell you it is not permitted any person to leave my presence unmaimed. One must have rules, you know."

"You would chop off an arm? or a hand? or a whole finger? Come now, Prince, you must be joking!"

Koshchei the Deathless was very grave as he sat there, in meditation, drumming with his long fingers upon the table-top that was curiously inlaid with thirty pieces of silver. In the lamplight his sharp nails glittered like flame-points. "Eh, sir, the toll which I exact you have already paid, though not to me. You have retained nothing that I esteem worth taking. So you, friend, may depart unhindered whenever you will."

Jurgen meditated this clemency, and with a sick heart he understood. "Yes, that is true. For I have not retained the faith nor the desire nor the vision. Yes, that is very true, worse luck. . . . Meanwhile I can assure you I admired each of the ladies very unfeignedly, and was greatly flattered by their kind offers. More than generous, I thought them. But it really would not do for me to take up with any one of them now. For Lisa is my wife, you see. A great deal has passed between us—and I have been a great disappointment to her, in many ways—and I am used to her—" Then Jurgen considered, and regarded the black gentleman with mingled envy and commiseration. "Why, no, you probably would not understand, sir, because I suppose there is no marrying or giving in marriage here, either. But I can assure you it is always pretty much like that."

"I lack grounds to dispute your aphorism," observed Koshchei, "inasmuch as matrimony was not included in my doom. None the less, to a by-stander, the conduct of both of you appears remarkable."

"The truth of it, sir, is a great symbol," said Jurgen, with a splurge of confidence, "in that my wife is rather foolishly fond of me. Oh, I grant you, it is the fashion of women to discard civility toward those for whom they suffer most willingly: and whom a woman loveth she chasteneth, after a good precedent. . . . For, Prince, they are all poets; but the medium they work in is not always ink. So the moment that Lisa is set free from what, in a manner of speaking, sir, inconsiderate persons might, in their unthinking way, refer to as the terrors of a place that I do not for an instant doubt to be conducted after a system which furthers the true interests of everybody, and so reflects vast credit upon its officials, if you will pardon my frankness, sir"—and Jurgen smiled ingratiatingly—"why, at that moment Lisa's thoughts take form in very much the high denunciatory vein of Jeremiah and Amos, who were remarkably fine poets: and her next essay in creative composition is my supper. Tomorrow she will darn and sew me an epic. Such, sir, are Lisa's poems, all addressed to me, who came so near to gallivanting with mere queens! Oh, Prince, when I consider steadfastly the depth and the intensity of that devotion which, for so many years, has tended me, and has endured the society of that person whom I peculiarly know to be the most tedious and irritating of companions, I stand aghast, before a miracle. And I cry, *Oh, certainly a goddess!* Hah, all we poets write a deal about love: but none of us may grasp the word's full meaning until he reflects that this is a passion mighty enough to induce a woman to put up with him. And the crowning touch is that Lisa is jealous. Think upon that, now!" And Jurgen chuckled. "Yet still you probably would not understand, sir, because I suppose there is no marrying or giving in marriage, here either. No less, the truth of it is a great symbol."

Then Jurgen sighed, and shook hands with Koshchei, very circumspectly, and went home to his wife. And he found her quite unaltered. Thus it was in the old days.

CRÊPE DE CHINE

*by James Stephens**

THE thing came on her like a thunderbolt, and indeed while she was submitting to destiny the phrase "like a bolt from the blue" did detach itself for an instant in her consciousness, but it was fallen upon and buried by the avalanche of emotions and angers and plannings which her mind was trying so vainly to deal with.

She had gone, it was a custom of hers on sunny afternoons, into the Saint Stephen's Green Park and had walked a little, and sat a little, and looked for a while at the flowers and at the ducks swimming each with a tiny brood bobbing lightly in its wake; and at a seagull that swooped and slanted to touch the water with the tip of its bill, and then, without a pause, slid widely sideways, and up easily again, and away on adventures never to be recorded.

Her purpose was to go down Grafton Street to a shop in the window of which, too late for action on the previous evening, she had seen a blouse marked at a price which she believed must be a mistake or a shop trick. She foresaw there would be trouble in the shop when she asked for it at the price marked on the ticket, and that the salespeople would say the blouse was too small for her, and would try to make her take another of the same kind at three times the price. But she meant to give battle and was determined not to leave the shop without the identical blouse whether it fitted her or whether it did not.

She was in the Green to prepare herself for this battle, for by gazing on tranquil water we gain something of its tranquillity, and the untroubled serenity of flowers and blue skies would give her the serenity of mind which could break even the will of a drapery salesman.

If, she thought, they send me a saleswoman I shall have a hard fight, but if they send me a man I may win without much trouble, for men get tired easily. Also, she thought, men cannot fight well when they know they are in the wrong, but women fight as well for the wrong as for the right. The man will know that the figure marked on the blouse is an advertising trick designed to entice people into the shop, and when I accuse him of that he will give in where a woman would not.

* Stephens is perhaps most famous as the author of the magnificent philosophical fantasy *The Crook of Gold*; but he is a poet as well as story-teller.

The influence of the peaceful, sunny place had done its work and feeling braced and tranquil she arose from the iron seat and turned up the alley by the lake towards the Grafton Street exit. When she stood she looked across the pond and noticed that two friends of hers were seated in the shade of a small tree, and the thought came to her that she would tell them of her errand. She might even ask them to accompany her, for in a shop all discussion closes when several voices are raised in protest.

She went across the steep little bridge and bore down on her friends. They did not notice her approach, and she thought smilingly: "When women so lose themselves in talk they are either talking scandal or dress." And she halted a moment so that she might not come on them too abruptly. The short, bushy tree was between them, and on this side of the tree also there was a seat.

The instant she halted she heard her own name mentioned, and knew that she was the subject of the scandal if scandal it was. She smiled shyly, slipped into the seat on her side of the tree, and listened to the talk of her friends.

In a few seconds she was no longer smiling, and where she had been listening carelessly she now listened with her whole being.

"How did he come to marry her?" said one voice.

"He didn't marry her, my dear," the other voice replied, "she married him."

"She must be at least ten years older than he is."

"Yes, at least, and I'm sure he knows it by this."

"Do they get on together, do you think?"

"One never knows, but I would say they do not. They snap a good deal at each other, and even when he does not snap he seems always impatient when she is speaking."

"Well, she has a strident voice."

"She never talks, she yells, and he is one of those strung-up people who get shivers when—Do you know what I think?"

"What do you think?"

"I think that some day or other he will run away from her."

"I don't think he will do that. I don't think he is the kind . . . of man—"

"I do. I think he is exactly the kind of man. If they had children he is the kind of man who would never leave his children: but they have none, and that is the only thing which could hold him to her. Think

of the way she yells in a room or in a restaurant, and how quiet he is. Every movement of hers must seem to him like the worst kind of vulgarity. And she is vulgar, look at the way she dresses. She is always a fright. If she has the right skirt she has the wrong boots, and when her blouse is right, her hat is wrong. She hasn't got a particle of taste, the poor thing."

"She has no taste in dress, that is true, but—"

"She has no taste in anything, and she draws attention to herself always, always. He must hate to be with her."

"Men don't see these things."

"Don't they, my dear! Don't they! That type of man notices everything. I've seen him looking at her when he didn't know anyone was looking at him. Oh! I'm no fool, and I tell you this, that I'll bet you anything he'll run away from her."

"Oh, now, she is not so bad as you say."

"Not for us, but for him she is worse than anything we could say. He hates her, and if he doesn't run away from her before the year is out I—I'll never believe in my own judgment again."

"If only she had a child, the poor thing!"

"She hasn't one and she'll never have one, you and I know that."

Listening to them, she grew livid with rage. She rose to her feet, stepped carefully to the grass and walked away.

These were her friends!

These gabby monsters who kissed her every time they met and kissed her every time they parted! And they were always meeting. She went to tea in their houses: they came to tea in hers. Oh! They would not take tea together again. Never again would either of these women put a foot inside her door. That was one thing gained from it all. She knew her enemies now. She was warned at least. Ah, but she would meet them. She would meet them once more and she would cut them to the bone. Now she knew the run of their tongues, but they did not know hers yet. Her husband did, and they would, too. Her husband! He was to run away from her! Well, she would see about that, too. That man! Man! He was more like a snail than a man. And he was to run away from her! She would like to see him run. Indeed, if there was a run in him she would make him run. And he wasn't pleased with her ways. He looked at her, it seemed, when he thought no one observed him, and looked at her as if he hated her. One of these days he might have cause to hate her. A stuck-up prig that thought no one was to open

their lips except himself. And he had to have two clean collars every day. And no one but himself was under any circumstances to go into his study. And no one was to open their mouths while his mouth was open. And he wanted a bedroom all to himself. And he wanted his meals at regular hours. And he wanted to go out whenever he liked and come in at all hours. And he wanted his clothes properly brushed. Well! All those things would be seen to, and he would learn that he wasn't a gay bachelor any longer. She would teach him that he had a wife, and that she had her rights, and that she would have her rights.

As she walked her brain was reeling with rage and spite. She would joyfully have learned that her two friends were dead: that they had been crushed by a tram or that a roof had fallen in on them. Less than that they did not deserve, but for her husband no catastrophe could be enormous enough, no torment sufficiently harrowing: no death or disaster of which she could think would be adequate to that man's perfidy. Man! and away her mind went again denouncing and sneering and threatening.

She forgot all about the blouse which was marked vastly below its proper price in the Grafton Street window; she forgot about her two friends and what they had said of her under the tree in the Park: she forgot about the street and the people in the street whom she jostled and pushed aside without raising an eye to them: she remembered only that there was someone whom she could make pay for all this: someone whom she would make pay and she was hastening towards him to make him pay.

The evening was advanced and although the sun was still shining it was shining with a difference. That limpid clarity of the morning was gone: the strong white glare of afternoon had changed: here was now a dust of gold, the first veil of those innumerable veilings which the evening does not cease to spread until her obscurity is complete, and life is hushed, and all the eyes that were open close in quietness.

Under this tender radiance she walked home and untouched by it, touched only by the lowest passions of her being she reached home.

The maid who opened the door said, in reply to her question, that the master was not in yet; and she remembered that at that hour he always went for a walk. "He has been out a long time today," said the maid.

She went upstairs and took off her hat.

Reminders of her husband were visible everywhere through the

house. Here was one of his waistcoats; there was a cigar case; yonder a pair of his slippers, and the sight of them set her off again. . . . "And he must have a separate bedroom, and he must have this, and he must have that, and no one else is to have anything. And no one is to say a word until he has finished speaking. And no one is to go into his study. . . ."

She arose and marched resolutely downstairs and into his study. She sat down, looking about the room with a feeling of dislike that was almost hatred even for the room. A sheet of paper was lying on the table and she drew it idly towards her. It was written upon. She read it. It was a short note saying he could no longer live with her and giving the address of his solicitors, who would regulate their affairs and make all the necessary arrangements. It said that under no circumstances would he ever return to her.

As she read the blood ebbed at one stroke from her cheeks, and at a stroke rushed blindly back again, and her hand that held the paper began to tremble violently.

BAGATELLE

by Edwin Markham

A queen's caprice, a courtier's boast, and lo,
The gilded château mushroomed into air—
Rose lightly as a mist the breezes bear—
Rose reckless of the People's piteous woe
And the long hunger that the toilers know—
Rose on the brink of all that ruin of things,
The crash of centuries, the doom of kings,
While flaming rages thundered from below.

Fools! fools! one hour and hell comes battle-red,
With work-worn millions crying out for bread—
Comes with the hoof-beat of The Marseillaise,
The fury of the people spurned and trod,
The surge and clamor of the judgment day—
Poor wild hands feeling blindly after God!

THE ETERNAL MASCULINE

by *Leonora Speyer*

I

PAUL STURGIS looked long and plaintively at the little pile of manuscript which drifted over his nice old Sheraton writing-table.

There lay the unfinished story on which he had been more or less spasmodically working all the week—his best story, too, he considered—and visions of its appearance in one of the more pretentious and self-conscious magazines, beyond whose Alpine heights his panting ambitions sought not to climb, gleamed like a fair landscape before him.

Paul was a lawyer by profession, one of the many quietly successful ones. The little circle of devoted women-friends, enclosing him like a setting around some rare and greatly prized gem, knew nothing of him as a lawyer—for although Paul was always gaily loquacious, the "setting" suspected that it did not know much about *anything* that concerned him really—but Sybil told Anne "that a man had told Jack that he had heard Paul passionately pleading the cause of a New Jersey plumber one day in the courts, while, he, the man, was waiting for his case to come on, and that it was 'some performance.'"

They knew, too, that Paul wrote for the magazines. Occasionally they came across a short story of his, in which they sometimes recognized themselves, more or less fantastically garbed, or some little elaborated incident in Paul's life—and not very well told, to their surprise, for he was an unusually good raconteur and they wondered what happened when he began to write.

Anne brought home a sonnet one day, which she had found—and surreptitiously taken possession of—among the inevitable pile of back-numbers on the inevitable table of her dentist's waiting-room. It was a good sonnet, too,—“as good as gold,” Anne said—and the “setting” decided that they liked it very much, and told Paul so.

But on the whole they did not think much of his writing, and as Paul himself seemed to prefer not talking about it, the subject was easily avoided.

He hated criticism of any kind. It hurt him horribly, made him coldly angry, and in that little group of joyously, mercilessly critical young minds, he passed unmolested.

For they had all learned, at one time or another, what “hurting” Paul meant—and how he had been missed as they ate of the

bitter fruit of that tree of knowledge and sat alone under its dark branches.

For on these occasions Paul simply disappeared—and it was very difficult to find him again. Anything was better than these vanishings, the setting decided, and so they adapted themselves as well as they could to his debonair self-absorption, his ruthless lack of consideration, his “will-o’-the-wispness,” as Anne called it. Paul was “pure pagan,” Anne explained—the setting always came to her when in “Paul-troubles,”—again Anne’s way of putting it—she *interpreted* him the best, they said.

And they suffered him gladly! They did all the inviting, the telephoning, the ordering of theater-tickets, of supper-tables and taxis. Anne interpreted that it wasn’t that Paul was *stingy*, he simply didn’t want the *bother*, and he was too busy to be worried with the details; it was enough that he *came*. And they all agreed that no party was in the least what they called worth while, if Paul were not there to make it gloriously, supremely worth while.

Once Sybil “struck” as she announced to her husband hotly. Paul had chucked her at the last minute, *once too often*, she would not stand for it, she was *not* going to ask him to the house again, she was *not* going to Anne to have him explained, she was through, etc. etc.—

“Don’t quarrel with Paul; we’ll both miss him so,” Jack had called to her from the hall, on his way to the office. But she *had* quarreled with him—and Paul had disappeared as usual. It took months to get him back! Always glad to see her when they met, gaily, buoyantly glad, but always just leaving town “on a case” or oppressed with some work that “had to be finished” at home, and a typist coming to help him at eight o’clock.

“I’m sorry, Sybil, but I can’t manage it”—and he never could. And perhaps she would meet him that same evening at the theater with Anne; that maddening Anne who had warned her, or with Periwinkle or Madeleine, or worst of all with Mrs. “Gussie” Mainwaring, whom Sybil loathed. And Paul would beam and be so glad to see her, make no excuses and Sybil, no reproach—she wanted him back too much, and as for Jack, he was positively sulking for him!

And one day he returned. She had found his new felt hat, whose untimely loss he had loudly lamented all winter, upon her return to the cottage in the country the following spring. And she had expressed it to him with a neatly-written label tied securely to its immaculate ribbon.

It eventually reached him, battered but recognizable, and he wore it, label and all, when he walked in upon them one lovely Sunday morning, remarking that it was hot as Hades in town. Sybil was so glad to see him that she nearly wept, and Jack fell upon his neck and then made three of his wickedest cocktails, which they drank to the strains of "Ridi, Pagliacci" on the gramophone.

Once Anne rang him up at his office to tell him he simply *must* take her to the Russian ballet, as arranged weeks before; Anne had procured the tickets—such good ones, too—after great difficulties, and now Paul announced some work at home that simply had to be finished!

Anne suspected another short story; the last time she had seen him he had told her of an extraordinary scene he had just witnessed in the subway, between two infuriated men and a sobbing woman, evidently the wife of neither, but "something dearer," as Paul described her. He had remarked what a good story it would make and Anne had replied, apropos of nothing at all, "Don't forget we're going to Scheherazade on Thursday!" And they had both roared with laughter.

But Anne didn't laugh as she telephoned him about it. And Paul had suddenly interrupted her to say, "Listen! There's a band in the street! I'm going to hang the telephone out of the window for you to hear!"

There was a pause and then Anne heard the faint, rhythmic strains of a Sousa march. And after a while Paul's voice, excitedly, "Did you get it? We ought to be dancing this minute! Isn't life hell, Anne! Don't be cross with me, my dear!"

And Anne wasn't. She thought of Sybil's bitter experience and of her own sage advice to her at the time, and so she turned with a very real little pain in her heart, to the next-best companion with whom to share the exotic joys of "Scheherazade."

"I know I'm silly to mind," she whispered to herself as she looked up the telephone numbers of the next-bests, "but there it is—I *do* mind!"

And added as she wrote down the numbers, "God help the woman that falls in love with Paul Sturgis!"

II

And now he sat looking at the scattered sheets on his writing-table.

"I could have finished it tonight," he said suddenly in a loud, firm voice. Paul gathered up the manuscript almost tenderly and put it in the drawer of the table. He looked at the clock, and his heart gave a

queer little leap. Why had he asked Periwinkle to tea? He hardly knew. Sometimes he wondered if he were falling in love with her. "In love with a girl—? God forbid!" and he touched wood hastily.

At any rate, Periwinkle was coming to tea. Her name was Pervenche, because of a French grandmother, but Paul, not liking his French accent, called her Periwinkle "for short," and called her that, by the way, the first time they met; Anne said once that nobody minded *what* Paul did the first time and if they minded afterwards it was too late.

The setting had demurred a little over Periwinkle. Paul had told Anne she must ask her to dinner.

"But I hardly know her," Anne had weakly objected.

"That doesn't matter," declared Paul, "I've told her about you. She'll love you, Anne. And she's a peach! Thursday and Monday suit her best. Whom shall we ask?"

Poor Anne! She was just convalescing from an acute attack of what she called "bookitis," which meant going seriously into the question of the tradesmen's books, prior to drastic reform, and she had resolved not to have a dinner-party for a month at least. But what could she do?

And the party was certainly a huge success. Periwinkle proved a great addition to the setting, even Madeleine admitted that, as she said good night to Anne.

"What's Paul doing with a *girl*, anyway?" she had disapproved on the telephone when asked to the dinner. "We're all married!"

"Paul says she isn't a bit like a girl," Anne answered happily. "He says she's as young and innocent as we are."

So Madeleine came. And Paul got her to ask them all down to her house on Long Island over Sunday.

He wondered if Periwinkle would mind there being no tea. She never seemed to care much about it herself, although her hands fluttered about her mother's tea table like two expert, administering, bejeweled white birds, every Wednesday from four to six.

He hoped she would not miss her tea, but nothing would have induced him to buy a tea-set and kettle, and all the rest of the paraphernalia! He hated food or the suggestion of food, in his rooms; he did not even breakfast there and certainly never entertained friends, preferring his club, a good restaurant, or better still, their own houses. This he admitted with an engaging frankness when pressed by the setting for an invitation.

"What do you want to come to my squalid little flat, for? It's much nicer here!"

His flat wasn't squalid at all and he knew it; he had taken immense pains and spent a good deal of money over it, and the result was thoroughly satisfactory; but that is how he warded off all possible parties in his rooms.

Not one of Paul's women-friends had ever seen them, but rumors of old prints, Queen Anne furniture and a lacquer cabinet filled with Waterford glass reached them from various reliable sources. It was exasperating.

And then he asked Periwinkle to tea; and she accepted joyfully.

"Oh, Paul, what fun! Of course I'll come! Whom shall we ask? It's *my* party, remember; they're all to understand that!"

"No one's to be asked," he answered. "It's *our* party, just yours and mine."

"Oh," she said, and turned a lovely pink which Paul adored. Then she laughed.

"How disgustingly selfish of us! When we both know how that beloved Anne and Sybil and Madeleine—to say nothing of Mrs. Gussie—are dying to come! No, no, we must certainly have them, Paul, especially Anne."

"I don't want them," he replied serenely. "I love them but I don't want them, Periwinkle. I only want you. Will you come?"

"I—I'll think about it," she answered.

"Tuesday's a good day," he continued affably, "there's nothing in the courts for me on Tuesday."

"If there were, you'd chuck me, I suppose," she said. And he answered simply, "I'd have to, my dear."

"Or a new story coming," she went on. "I actually believe you'd put me off—provided I said I'd come which I haven't, *nota bene*—for a new story!"

"There *is* one coming, *nota bene*; what's more, I'm *harassed* about it, I ought not to be thinking about anything else. I'm stuck in the big love-scene, Periwinkle! And I don't care a damn! All I care about is your coming to tea on Tuesday."

"Mother'd be so shocked, Paul. *Do* let's have Anne!"

"Next time, perhaps," he answered quite firmly. "This time, no! Will you come, Winkle?"

"Yes, Paul," said Periwinkle meekly. There was a funny little chirp in her voice as she spoke, she wondered if he had noticed it.

III

She came in quickly, a little shyly and stood in the middle of the room looking about. Paul suddenly remembered he had meant to get some flowers. Her first words broke the thin skim of atmospheric ice with true Periwinkle dash.

"Well, of all the pigs! *What* a sweet place!"

She looked at Paul severely.

"Anne shall know of this!" she announced.

She moved towards the Waterford glass, aloof and sparkling on its shelves.

"And you never wanted us—never missed us!"

"I know now how I've missed you," he answered, "it's wonderful having you here."

He pushed a big chair towards the fire.

"Sit down, you darling Winkle."

"Paul, you *are* the most artistically selfish human being I ever dreamed of! I'm going to take off my hat so that I can lean back and tell you what I really think of you."

"Isn't it a new hat?" he asked with reverent interest.

"*New?*" she echoed. "Why, Paul, I saw that bird of Paradise hatch out of its little French hat-box one hour ago! It's just arrived from Paris! I bought it on my way here! It gave me a great courage, Paul, which Heaven knows I needed when that sinister elevator-girl asked me which floor."

They both contemplated the hat solemnly.

"Bon jour!" said Paul, and placed it respectfully on a fat black satin cushion trimmed with purple chenille and a large bunch of turquoise-blue pears.

"How well my cushion looks, doesn't it?" remarked Periwinkle.

"Are the pears very uncomfortable?"

"They haven't complained about anything," said Paul and drew up a little stool close to her chair.

He sat down and laid his head upon her knees simply and naturally. She let him, of course. One always let Paul do these things. Anne had been dropped from the visiting lists of three old friends of her father's because Paul had put his head on her shoulder at a dinner-party. But Anne didn't mind in the least.

"They don't know Paul," was her only comment, "and their dinners were a pain anyway."

"Do you think Mr. Sturgis will ever marry?" she had been asked meaningly, after this particular dinner, by one of the shocked ladies who had seen Paul's head, and Paul always claimed that her answer was what caused her name to be erased from the three lists, much more than what he had done to her shoulder! "If one of our husbands dies, he may," Anne said calmly.

Paul's head felt very nice on Periwinkle's knees. His hair was turning gray at the temples, she noticed. How thick it was, how good it smelled. Periwinkle had a curious desire to stroke it. She began to talk lightly of his old prints and the green and white Wedgwood plates running about the room on a little shelf.

"If mother divorces me for coming here today, I think I'll marry you for the sake of those darling old plates," she reflected.

"I wish you would; and I'll give you the plates for a wedding present. Will you marry me, Winkle?"

"No, Paul," said Periwinkle.

"How unkind," he sighed in relieved tones and put his head on her knees again.

"And I see no signs of tea," she continued, "I'm going to ask for a cigarette to deaden the pangs of hunger."

Paul rose with evident reluctance.

"I was *so* comfortable!" he grumbled, "I wish you wouldn't be so restless!"

He gave her a cigarette and lit one for himself.

"How's the big love-scene?" she asked and blew an expert little ring towards him. "There's a wedding-ring for it!"

Paul groaned.

"They're still floundering about!" he said. "Such a good situation, too! I don't know what's the matter with those two people—I simply *can't* make them kiss! They just stand there staring at each other like two fools!"

"*Must* they kiss!" she asked with interest.

"Of course they must!" he cried, looking at her with reproachful eyes.

"But they *won't*! They go on making page after page of ridiculous conversation; I'm sick of them both!"

She looked at him.

"Perhaps it isn't their fault," she said gently, "poor things!"

Paul thought deeply for quite half a minute.

"You mean it's mine," he answered. "Perhaps you're right. I—I have a horror of the melodramatic and lovers are always so melodramatic!"

"And if they are not—they 'stick!' " remarked Periwinkle. "You've read too much Henry James, my friend."

Paul crossed over to the writing table. He opened the drawer and took out his manuscript with great deliberation.

"I think I'll read it to you, Winkle. It's a thing I never do—I hate doing! I don't like criticism—it depresses me! And I certainly never court it. But I'm going to read you the whole darned story—as far as I've gotten. Be as patient—and as kind—as you can!"

There was a glint of two big steel buckles as she crossed her feet comfortably on the stool.

"Read on, Macduff!" she said gaily. "I'm so happy, dear Macduff! Oh, Paul, I'm having a divine time, and I love being read to!"

IV

It was an involved little story and Periwinkle found it difficult to concentrate upon the plot that seemed to drift like smoke about the characters. Her ear kept wandering to Paul's voice, which took on curious tones and undertones as he read; she liked his intent gray eyes, the whimsical lift of his upper lip, the slim brown hands. Her mind darted in and out of the flow of words like an uneasy humming-bird.

Paul read steadily on. Oh, it wasn't good, it wasn't *any* good, the story! Periwinkle was filled with a kind of panic as she listened. He had told her quite frankly that he didn't like criticism—and she knew what happened when Paul didn't like anything—she was sure, too, that he would see through any forced praise—that dear, dear, over-sensitive Paul! and she began to realize just how dear he was to her.

What should she do? What should she say to him?

"Mother would pronounce this a divine judgment on me for having come," she thought. And now Paul was reading the "big love-scene."

It flashed across her suddenly that she could write this story herself—and much better—she saw so plainly what was wrong, just how she would have built up that toppling structure into swift, sure words!

"And that's all," said Paul, and put the manuscript back into the drawer of the writing-table.

Periwinkle noticed that there was a clock somewhere very near; she had never heard a clock breathe in such a strident, noisy, insistent

way, she wondered how Paul could stand it—And the next minute she was in his arms.

She was in his arms and strangely, wonderfully glad to be there; they closed around her like two great gates, shutting out the world of little things that she never wanted to play with any more.

And through the divine unreality of what she knew was a truth still more divine, she listened to a voice against her cheek, Paul's voice that she had always loved so, telling her of his love for her, in abrupt, tender absurd little words that made her even more utterly his.

"Oh Winkle, darling—we love each other! And we didn't know it! We've fooled about all this time! And we love each other! *Don't we!*"

"Yes, Paul, we love each other."

"Put your arms around me, dear. We adore each other—and we *didn't know it!* Say we adore each other, Winkle!"

"Yes, Paul—we adore each other."

And at last they grew braver and looked into each other's faces, and there they found the light that led them groping, blinded by its brightness, to each other's lips.

Then, as swiftly as she was lifted to the stars, was Periwinkle dashed to earth again.

"The big scene!" said Paul. "I've got it, Winkle! I know how to write it now! Those blessed lovers—I know just what was wrong with them!"

V

She had forgotten all about the story. The foolish, badly-written little story! *But Paul had not!* And he was going to write about this miracle—their miracle that they had found together—he was going to publish it in a magazine, for anyone to read! Visions of news-stands at the Grand Central Station, at the Ritz-Carlton, at Lexington Avenue and Forty-second Street, rows and rows of magazines all telling of their love, of hers and Paul's great love, rose like a hideous mirage in the stretching desert in which she stood, a mournful traveler, alone. He still held her close.

"How wonderful everything is going to be!" he was saying, and she thought, "I'm dead, broken into little pieces—and he doesn't even know it."

"You see, you darling Winkle, I've always loafed through life, everything was a joke. But now—I love you—kiss me, kiss me— And then we'll ring up Anne and ask her to the wedding!"

What happened after that was always unclear, she could never visualize it in her thoughts. She remembered laughing a high-pitched, ghastly little laugh that seemed to do something to his face, she remembered pushing him away, both hands against his breast, on which she lay no longer; *somebody* said—was it she—it *must* have been, obviously, but what had happened to her voice? "Our honeymoon will make a lovely story, won't it? *Any* magazine would publish it, I should think!" Again that horrid cackling laugh. "No, *Paul!* You've got the 'big scene'—for one silly little story—they know *how to kiss now*, those blessed lovers!" That's enough, I guess—"

She never knew how she found her way to the street—she had a curious recollection of throwing her Paradise-bird hat out of the taxi window and thinking that he would probably have put that into a story, too—

He had called to her as she slipped through the door, "If you leave me like this, I swear I'll never forgive you!"

And she had answered, "That's a good line for a parting scene!"

VI

The setting saw little of Paul during the next weeks. And then he telephoned to Anne that he was coming to tea, and arrived with a book of somebody's new poems which he read very beautifully and made brilliant fun of, after a formidable "stinger," Anne-mixed, four large slices of chocolate-cake and countless cigarettes.

He played with the baby, inquiring anxiously why it didn't walk yet, and was Anne *sure* it wasn't paralyzed, which worried her a little for hours afterwards—passionate mother that she was—although she knew it was nonsense; and he insisted upon taking a goldfish out of the Japanese garden, in order to prove that the fluff on top of the baby's head was exactly the same shade of pink-gold, winning his point triumphantly, although at the expense of Anne's best goldfish.

He also made a bet with Sybil, who had been hastily summoned by telephone, to the effect that she would never get her cook back from her sister, to whom she was lent for a dinner-party, the bet consisting of Sybil's platinum and diamond wedding-ring against his dyeing his hair any color she chose.

"Paul was great today," said Anne after he had gone, "but I don't think he's looking well. And he's drinking too many cocktails—although I love him to have them *here* if he *must* have them at all!

What a pity Periwinkle is in Atlantic City! Did I tell you I got a handsome post-card of the boardwalk from her the other day?"

"I wonder if Paul is in love with anybody?" remarked Sybil thoughtfully. "He looked just like that when he was running about with Annabel Azore two winters ago—you remember Annabel, and her wonderful trained seals, don't you, Anne?"

"Of course I do; that's the only story of Paul's I ever really liked."

"I wonder if Annabel did?" Sybil rose as she spoke and picked up her muff and gloves. "I do think he ought to buy you a new goldfish. The Japanese garden looks like Asbury Park without it!"

"But he won't," sighed Anne ruefully, "and it cost me five dollars! What color do you intend dyeing his hair? *Do* let me dye it for you, Sybil! You know what a success I made of the baby's winter coat, and I've got heaps of green left over."

VII

And then it came!

"You have sent us a very unusual story," wrote the sub-editor of the *Best Monthly*, "and one that gives us much pleasure in publishing. We are including it in our April number. Trusting that you will give us an early opportunity," etc., etc.

Paul read the sub-editor's letter three times. It was an immense comfort to him. A very unusual story!

"It ought to be!" he thought to himself grimly.

Periwinkle—Periwinkle! He had laid his face across the pages of the "big scene" as he re-wrote it—he wasn't sure, but he believed he had wept a little—it was so like her!

He had lost her; she would never come back, he knew; and his face wore the aloof look the setting dreaded so, as he reflected that he *did not want her back*. "Your silly little story!" Well, he had the sub-editor's letter to apply to the smart of that, and he was grateful to her in a way, for it was thanks to those ever-remembered words, and to what had come before—remembered, too—that he had had the energy to rewrite the whole story, a thing he had never troubled to do in all his life, and which had certainly improved it enormously.

Still, he did not want her back! She had hurt him too much. He had been intensely relieved to hear that she had left town and he had not seen her since that miserable day. Something of her lingered for weeks about the room. It was not her perfume—he did not know *what* it was—but it drove him to the club-bar too often. He thanked God, he reflected

whimsically, that he had not bought a tea-set to remind him of her all his life!

"We wouldn't have been happy together," he kept saying to himself, until it became a kind of parrot-cry squawking at him comfortingly, when the pain for her throbbed through his cold resentment. "Girls aren't human, anyway."

He used to lie awake in the dark repeating over and over to himself, "We wouldn't have been happy together!"

He wondered if she would see the story. Oh, hell—he didn't care!

VIII

The April number of the *Best Monthly* arrived the last days of March. It had a wonderful cover, all daffodils, and a girl in a blue sweater standing among them, daffodil-colored hair flying in a vividly depicted spring breeze.

Paul's heart beat more quickly as his fingers stumbled over the crisp pages. There it was, "The Big Scene"—yes, he had called it that. He read his name with the unfailing accompanying thrill, he read the story straight through, almost solemnly, an anxious eye on the outlook for possible typographical errors.

When he had finished he smiled, a little wanly. It *was* an "unusual story," the editor of the *Best* was right. God, how sweet Periwinkle was in print!

And suddenly a great longing for her surged through him. He remembered how she had clung, all the warmth of her body glowed against him again, thawing the frozen misery that had chilled his heart all those long weeks. He seemed to hear her voice, the breathless, happy little voice: "Yes, Paul, we adore each other!"

He got up from his chair, something capitulated unconditionally within him; he would go to her, kneel to her, implore her to be as she had been when she said, "Yes, Paul, we adore each other!"

What if she refused to see him, what if she were not at home?

He decided that he would telephone. He hated being told that people were not at home; it irritated him; he felt snubbed as he turned away from their closing doors. He couldn't bear Periwinkle not being at home! He must be sure, too, that she would be glad to see him.

He felt a little dizzy as he waited at the telephone. "I'm telephoning Fate," he thought. "I'm telephoning the gods. I'm telephoning Periwinkle!" What a good poem that would make, free-verse of course!

Yes, she was at home. Could he speak to her—never mind about the name; a friend wanted to speak to her.

There was a pause, he heard somebody talking a long way off, somebody whistling, beating a carpet—no, that was his own ridiculous heart—

"Hello! Who is it? This is Miss Middleton, yes—"

And then a strange thing happened. The four walls of his cosy room seemed to topple apart, the earth swung clear of him, and Paul hung in mid-air, clutching the telephone as one would cling to a swaying, creaking branch over an abyss. And something seemed to call from the depths, "Hang up the receiver, you fool! *Or jump!*"

"*Hello—bello—this is 2624—*" It was Periwinkle's voice—and the little chirp was in it—but Paul hung up the receiver.

In one flashing moment of complete self-revelation he realized that he didn't want to speak to her, didn't dare to speak to her. He was afraid of her and all that it would mean if he spoke! He was afraid for his comfortable, self-centered life, his happy-go-lucky, perfectly irresponsible life in the little flat that he had made exactly what he wanted it to be. He didn't want to give it up, to give *anything* up—not even for the bliss of Periwinkle—he didn't want to change, to share—*he didn't want to marry!*

"Your silly little story!" And her face as she said it! He put his hand up to his forehead; it felt wet and he felt faint and sick. With an effort he got up and crossed over to the writing-table, pulled a brandy-flask out of a drawer, put it to his lips, drained it.

"Good God!" he said aloud. A great loneliness came over him all of a sudden and with the loneliness a great longing for Anne.

He would go to her, put his head onto her knee, smoke a thousand cigarettes, drink a thousand stingers! Perhaps he would read her "The Big Scene." He realized perfectly that Anne didn't think much of his stories, but she'd have to like "The Big Scene." It was the best thing he had done and Anne would be the first to see that—dear, clever Anne! He would buy her the biggest bunch of daffodils he could carry and lay them, together with the daffodil-covered *Best*, in her lap, without a word.

"She'll probably drop dead," he thought as he reached for his coat. "I've never done such a thing to Anne, but it's a nice little gesture. Besides, I owe her something for the goldfish. I believe Anne was fond of that goldfish—and I'm fond of Anne."

As he opened the outer door of his flat the telephone rang, long and insistently. Without looking round, he passed out and closed the door behind him.

"We wouldn't have been happy together," he announced to any one who chose to hear as he ran down the long flights of stairs to the street. He wouldn't ring for the elevator, the new girl got on his nerves; she *would* talk to him. He wished George, the pleasant colored boy who stole things, hadn't been sent away.

WHITEMAIL

*by Joyce Kilmer**

SPIKE RITCHIE and I worked together on the *Daily News* from 1904 to 1907, and I always liked him. He was bright, hard-working, companionable and—I thought—perfectly straight. The other day he told me about a pretty crooked deal he was mixed up in. In fact, he told me that he was an unrepentant blackmailer and traitor. And I like him more than I ever did before.

When I got back to New York last week I looked over the pictures I had bought in Turkey and decided that I had the material for some Sunday stories. So I went around to the *News* office. The elevator man didn't know me—he had been on the job only two years—but he knew Spike.

"Mr. Ritchie is assistant Sunday editor now," he said. "But I don't think you'll find him in his office. Today's Thursday, so I guess he's in the composing room."

I made him let me off at the composing room and went in. There was Spike, telling the foreman that Matty had a glass arm, and making up the fashion page. He had grown much balder, but otherwise he had changed very little since I saw him six years before. He was the same little stoop-shouldered fellow, with the same rattail mustache and apparently the same cigar butt fixed in the corner of his mouth. Also, I discovered in a few minutes, he had the same alcoholic breath.

* This was one of the few efforts in the field of fiction by the poet and critic who was killed soon after America got into the war on the side of the Allies.

"Hello, John!" he said. "Wait till I fix this up and I'll go out with you."

Soon we were comfortably seated at a table in Jimmy's bar. Jimmy, I was absurdly pleased to notice, remembered me and put a few drops of syrup in my Irish as if I were still a daily visitor. Spike looked at my pictures and told me to go ahead with the stories. Then—of course—we both grew reminiscent, and after the third drink and a little lunch came his confession. That is, if you'd call it a confession . . . "You're not the only globe trotter," he said, lighting for the fourth time his amorphous cigar butt. "I went abroad two summers ago."

I expressed interest—without much enthusiasm, for I wanted to talk about Turkey.

"Yes," he said, "I had a little money saved up—I wasn't married then—and I was feeling pretty rotten, so I decided to knock off for a while. I traveled around the Continent for a few weeks and then I went to London. I wanted to see something of the country, so I bought a knapsack and made a leisurely walking tour of the Midland counties. And the result of that walking tour was a mighty queer experience—in fact, I may say a damn queer experience. And, in spite of the fact that you are bursting with the desire to tell me how you matched pennies with the Sultan and chucked the harem under its chin, I am now going to take up some minutes of the *News's* time in telling you about that experience. It has never been used as a news story, and it never will. But the villain—unless you call me the villain—is dead now, and I guess it wouldn't do any harm if you fixed it up with different names and made a fiction story out of it. Then if you sell it you can split with me fifty-fifty."

"Go ahead," I said.

"Well (began Spike), I struck a little bit of a market town called Ashbourne that I liked pretty well. So I got a room at an inn entertainingly called 'The Green Man and Black's Head' and settled down for a week's stay. There were very few other guests, so the proprietor and I got rather friendly. Of course, like all Englishmen, he was surprised that I didn't know his cousin who was on a ranch in Texas and his nephew who was manager of a grocery store in Milwaukee.

"There's one of your fellow countrymen I can't say that I care for," he said one evening. "There was a Mr. James Rodney who came here from New York City, and we all wish we'd never seen him, sir. Perhaps you know him—he's a tall, thin gentleman with a sort of a mole

over his right eye. He told us that he owned a big flour mill, but I don't know as he told the truth. Do you know a man of that name?'"

"I told him that I had never before heard of James Rodney, and by asking a few questions I heard a story that was unpleasant though not particularly strange. Two summers before that an American calling himself James Rodney had come to Ashbourne and stopped with Mrs. Clarke, the widow of the old vicar. She had very little money, and made a living by taking lodgers. He was on his way up north, and he had a two hours' wait between trains in Ashbourne. He took a walk through the town, stopped to get a drink of water at Mrs. Clarke's house, found that they took lodgers and by that night he had given up all idea of going north. He said that he liked Ashbourne and the Clarke cottage but, said the innkeeper, 'what really attracted him was Mary Clarke. She was an amazingly pretty girl in those days, sir; in fact, she is still, though she's had a hard time.'

"It did not take Rodney long to make Mrs. Clarke and Mary believe that he was a person of some importance in New York. He seemed to have plenty of money, his manners were those of a gentleman, and he became popular in local society. In fact, everyone was pleased when, after a tempestuous courtship, Mary and he were married in the beautiful old parish church.

"Mary thought that her husband would take her to America at once, but he said that he would prefer to see a little more of Europe. So they went to Switzerland for a couple of weeks and then returned to Mrs. Clarke's cottage. Rodney had received a cable from New York, he said. He must go back to his mill for a little while. It was an urgent matter—he must get the boat sailing from Liverpool on the very next day. He would send a letter by every mail and within a month he would come back for his wife and her mother.

"Of course you have guessed what happened. James Rodney or whatever his real name was, never came back. He did not write and, what is more important, he did not send any money. Letters sent to James Rodney, the Rodney Flour and Grain Company, 13 West Ninety-eighth Street, New York City, U. S. A., were returned by the Dead Letter Office. His name did not appear on the passenger list of the steamer on which he said he intended to sail. For a while Mrs. Clarke and Mary thought that he had met with some fatal accident, but after a friend of theirs, visiting America, had found that no such concern as the Rodney Flour and Grain Company had ever existed and that there

were no mills on Ninety-eighth Street, they knew that they had been cruelly deceived. In the course of time Mary had a baby, a very nice baby. It was a little boy, as pretty as Mary herself and resembling her strikingly. In only one respect he resembled his father—there was a small but unmistakable mole over his right eye.

"This story interested me very much, and I took the liberty of calling on Mrs. Clarke the next day, on the pretense of looking for lodgings. Indeed, it became more than a pretext, for Mrs. Clarke was such a charming old gentlewoman and the cottage and Mary—it was hard for me to call her Mrs. Rodney—so attractive that I took a room and stayed for three weeks.

"Of course I got from them all that they knew about the mysterious James Rodney, and that was little more than the innkeeper had told me. But just before I left Mrs. Rodney gave me a little kodak picture of her husband and herself, taken by her mother on the porch of the cottage.

"I went back to America with a fixed determination to find this Rodney person, smash his face and make him send every cent that he possessed back to Ashbourne. You see, I knew the suffering that his little game had inflicted on Mary and her mother and I was pretty sore about it. I confess I didn't have much hope of finding the fellow, but I was going to make a good try at it, anyway. Well, I didn't have to try very hard. I never was much good at this suspense business, so I'll spring my sensation on you right away. James Rodney was Andrew Judd. Yes—don't spill your whiskey—Andrew Judd, president of the Judd Iron Works, philanthropist and reformer.

"Two days after I got back, Boss Ridder sent me out to interview Judd for the Sunday edition. Judd had just invented a very fancy sort of model tenement with a gymnasium and swimming tank on every floor. In order to understand just what improvements were needed in the housing of the poor he had spent two days in a tenement house on the lower East Side, and was very eager to talk about it. As soon as I saw him I recognized him, and you can readily understand that my first desire was for a large encouraging draught of the beverage known as whiskey. And, by the way, ring that bell, will you? Jimmy, two more, please, and a little lunch with it.

"Well, of course I thought right away just what you thought—here is one hell of a big story! In spite of the fact that we were running this page interview in the Sunday, the *News* had no particular friendship

for Judd. In fact, we were going to oppose him in the fall. He was going to run for Mayor on some crazy reform ticket, and we, of course, were organization Democrat.

"I had all the facts and there was plenty of time to get the story in next morning's paper. All I had to do was to flash that little kodak picture (which I always carried with me) on Judd, tell him what I knew of his little European jaunt and let him throw me out of the office. Then back to the *News*, to grab all the space I wanted for the biggest sensation that the paper ever had. Think what a story like that would mean to me, an absolutely exclusive story with a picture to prove it! I saw myself getting a three-hundred-dollar bonus and a regular job at about eighty a week. Then, too, you know that I'm not talking sentiment when I say that I was—have always been—loyal to the *News*. You were long enough in the game to find out what a newspaper man's loyalty is—how his first idea when anything big happens is always to hammer it out on his machine and get it in before the first edition goes to press.

"But I had sense enough to hold on to myself for a while. I shook hands with Judd—I guess I stared pretty hard at that mole over his right eye—and I went ahead with the interview as had been arranged. Judd was feeling expansive that day, and he really knew how to talk. He gave me a great little story, full of human interest, and with a lot of new stuff in it, but all the while I was listening to him I was thinking harder than I ever thought before. There were three different plans in my mind—I couldn't to save my life, think just what I ought to do. After a while Judd felt that he'd given me all I needed and he stopped talking.

"‘Mr. Judd,’ I said, almost involuntarily, ‘when were you married?’

"‘Why, my dear boy, I don't see what that has to do with what we've been talking about; but I was married five years ago. In St. Marmaduke's Church, of which I am junior warden, if you wish the full particulars. My wife was Miss Emily Lindsay, and here is a picture of her.’

"He took from his desk a framed photograph of a very lovely woman with a little girl on her lap.

"‘I see,’ I said, vaguely. ‘And when was it that you went abroad?’

"‘Well, I really don't think that the public will be interested in matters like this,’ he said, ‘but I have been abroad several times. Two years ago I spent the summer in England, and then made a some-

what extensive tour of Germany. But I think that I must ask you to excuse me now. I've given you all you need, have I not? Oh, yes!' he added, 'I suppose you will want a picture of me. I think I have some in my desk drawer. I'll look and see.'

"'No,' I said, in a voice which seemed strange to me. 'I've got a picture already.'

"His back was turned to me, and he was rummaging in his desk. 'But I'm afraid that's been used before. I think I can find some new ones for you.'

"'This picture has never been used before,' I said. 'It was taken two years ago in Ashbourne.'

"At the word 'Ashbourne' he turned suddenly and looked at the little square of gray cardboard in my hands. Then he grew very white and stood perfectly still.

"For a minute neither of us spoke.

"Then, with a self-control for which I could not help admiring him, he pushed his chair to the desk, sat down, turned his back to me and wrote.

"I heard the rip of torn paper. He whirled his chair and stretched out his hands to me. In his left hand was an oblong of green paper with his name written in the lower right hand corner. His right hand was empty.

"'Here is a blank cheque, which I have signed,' he said. 'Give me the photograph, please.'

"I admit I hesitated for a moment. I am not so devoted to my job that I would hate an independent fortune. But I didn't hesitate long.

"It was a ridiculously theatrical thing to do, but I took the cheque, tore it into four pieces, and dropped them on the blotter on his desk.

"'To hell with your cheque!' I said, in a quiet conversational tone of voice. 'You'll need that money when you start defending yourself against the charge of bigamy.'

"Judd deliberately lit a cigar and sat looking at me.

"'So, you've got an interesting item for tomorrow's paper, have you?' he said. 'But what's the idea? Just what do you gain by attacking me? That little picture is interesting, but it proves absolutely nothing.'

"I rose to go. 'In the first place,' I said, with my hand on the door-knob, 'I know the girl whom you illegally married two years ago, and the *News* will bring her over here—with her child. We will gain two things—we will be purveyors of a very interesting story and we will bring punishment on a damned hypocrite.'

"He was perfectly calm. 'I see your first point,' he answered reflectively. 'You can publish a very sensational story—there is no doubt of that. But I doubt very much your ability to substantiate your charge, and I fail to see why you are so bitterly enraged at me. There must be some motive. . . . I think I see. Yes, I think I see. But what earthly good will it do the young woman to drag her name into this scandal? You cannot carry out your amiable design of ruining me without ruining also two women.'

"'All right,' I said, 'I'll tell you what I'll do. You've got to square yourself, and I'll keep quiet about this business. But you've got to square yourself.'

"'Just what do you mean by 'square myself'?' he said.

"'James Rodney must die,' I almost shouted.

"'My God!' he exclaimed. 'Do you want me to kill myself?'

"'You must kill James Rodney,' I said. 'See here, Mary Clarke has never heard of Andrew Judd. What you've got to do is to write her a letter signing your own name, saying that James Rodney was Tom Smith, or John Jones, or anything you like. Anyway, you must say that he was a friend of yours and that he is dead. Say that he confessed to you on his deathbed that he had married and deserted a girl named Mary Clarke in Ashbourne, England, and that he asked you to notify her of his death and to send her all his money.'

"'I'll do it,' he said. 'I'll do it this afternoon. I'll send her ten thousand dollars—fifty thousand dollars—all the money you say.'

"'You certainly will do it today,' I said, 'for I'm going to stick around and watch you do it. You will write the letter at my dictation and I will mail it myself. But as to the money that you are sending, you've got the wrong idea. You will send Miss Clarke enough money to buy that little cottage so that they won't have to earn the rent by taking lodgers and enough to pay for a trip abroad for her and her mother. They need a little holiday after the trouble you got them into, you filthy cad. Then you must add enough to send your son through school and through the university. I guess we'll put it at twenty thousand dollars—that's letting you off pretty cheap, and I don't want to burden them with a lot of your dirty money. And you must send the money in English bank-notes.'

"'I suppose you know,' Mr. Judd said to me, as I left him late that afternoon, 'that what you are doing is blackmail.'

"'Today,' I answered, 'I am, in suppressing this story, breaking the

commandment of the newspaper business—violating a code of ethics which you could not possibly understand. I am a traitor to the *News* and to my profession. And after that I don't mind a little blackmail.'"

Jimmy had taken away our empty glasses and was ostentatiously wiping the table with a gray napkin. Spike looked at his watch and got up to go. As we walked down the street I turned to him and said: "But didn't Mary What-you-may-call-her ever get wise? When Judd died last year she must have seen his picture in some English paper and known that he was the fellow that fooled her. I should think she'd sue his estate and get good money."

"Sure she got wise," said Spike. "But she wouldn't start anything now. She's perfectly comfortable, I guess."

"What is she doing?" I asked.

"Why," said Spike, lighting his cigar butt for the ninth time, "she's married to the assistant Sunday editor of the *Daily News*."

THE RABBIT-HUTCH

by George Sterling

Time:—A warm July morning.

Scene:—A rabbit-hutch containing two score Belgian hares, large and small. It is placed under a great elm tree, in the backyard of a dingy dwelling. A short thin man of about fifty years is placing cabbage leaves in one of the compartments of the hutch.

THE LITTLEST HARE

Father, who is that?

THE OLDEST HARE

That is God, my child.

THE LITTLEST HARE

What does that mean?

THE OLDEST HARE

It means that He is all-wise, all-powerful, all-good; that He watches over every action, and rewards and punishes us according to our deserts.

THE MOTHER HARE

That is true, my son. Never forget what your father has told you!

THE RABBIT-HUTCH

THE MAN

Guess that old buck will hafta go.

THE LITTLEST HARE

What is he saying, father?

THE OLDEST HARE

Hush, my son! His counsels are inscrutable. None shall penetrate to His designs.

THE LITTLEST HARE

(*Nibbling a cabbage leaf*) Oh! father! how good is the food with which He provides us!

THE MOTHER HARE

Give thanks to Him, my son, for He does this out of His great love, who might otherwise permit you to perish utterly.

THE MAN

Dam hawgs—! How they do git away with it!

THE LITTLEST HARE

Oh father! He spoke again!

THE MOTHER HARE

Infinite is His wisdom, my dear child. (*A small boy appears. The elder hares promptly retreat as far as possible. He picks up a slender stick, and after a look at The Man, who is now busy at the other end of the hutch, he thrusts it between the wires and gives the Littlest Hare a sharp poke.*)

THE LITTLEST HARE

Oh mother! What was that? I feel bad, mother! I do not like to feel like this!

THE MOTHER HARE

Hush, my child! That which you feel is pain. It is sent to you for your own good, to teach and ennoble.

THE OLDEST HARE

It is God's greatest gift to you, my son, looked at in the proper spirit. So thank Him for it.

THE LITTLEST HARE

Ai! Ai! Ai! I do not like it! Still I feel bad. Is that other man a god also?

THE OLDEST HARE

Be still, my son! You blaspheme He is God's opposite, even the Adversary of Him and His hares.

THE LITTLEST HARE

Why then, father, does God permit him to live and hurt us?

THE MOTHER HARE

That is one of His mysteries Presume not to question His goodness and His wisdom He knoweth best, and doeth all things well
[*The boy obtains a longer stick, with which he prods the oldest hare violently*]

THE OLDEST HARE

Ugh! Ow! Wah! Thou knowest best indeed, O God! But suffer thy servant to escape evil for the moment!

THE MAN

(*Noticing the boy*) Git outa here, ya little devil! Hain't I told ya to leave them hares alone?
[*Exit boy*]

THE OLDEST HARE

Ha, my son! said I not so? I called upon the Lord and He delivered me So answereth He the prayers of the just.

THE LITTLEST HARE

But why, father, did He permit the Adversary to draw near us at all

THE OLDEST HARE

Silence! Who are you to question His designs?

THE MOTHER HARE

By these pains, my son, He maketh us aware of His mercy and His vigilance Behold! He shall not fail us!

THE LITTLEST HARE

But why can't He do all that without hurting us? Seems to me He gets all the notice and we get all the pain.

THE OLDEST HARE

Blasphemer! Be still! Shall a portion question the Whole?
[*He kicks the Littlest Hare, who retires in shame and confusion to a corner of the compartment The Man re-appears, departing with a plump hare in*

THE RABBIT-HUTCH

either hand. He vanishes behind a woodpile, and soon two dull blows are heard.]

THE LITTLEST HARE

Oh father! where have my uncles gone? God has taken with Him two of my uncles! Will they not return?

THE OLDEST HARE

I think it unlikely, but question Him not. They go with Him to the Great Hutch, there to dine forever on freshest cabbage, and on viands of which we cannot even dream. They shall have innumerable descendants, and shall praise Him forever and ever.

THE LITTLEST HARE

How know you this, father?

THE OLDEST HARE

It was told me by my father, who had it from his father, who had it from his.

THE MOTHER HARE

So you see, my child, that it must be true, for what is your wisdom compared to theirs? You must have faith!

THE LITTLEST HARE

I believe, mother! I believe! How beautiful is faith!

THE OLDEST HARE

Yea! He doeth all things well!

[The Man re-appears, wiping his hands on his trousers. He gazes with solemnity at the Oldest Hare, who shudders visibly, and retreats to the farthest confines of the compartment.]

THE LITTLEST HARE

(Nibbling at a fresh cabbage leaf.) Thou art all good, O God! There is none like unto Thee in mercy and wisdom. How sweet are thy cabbage leaves! How glorious must be Thy Great Hutch! Suffer the Adversary to come not nigh unto me, for I am of Thy children!

THE MAN

That's right! Stuff it down, ya little hawg!

THRENODY UPON A DECADENT ART

by Joseph Wood Krutch

IN no department of human activity is our decline from the grace of the ancients more evident than in that of suicide.

It is not that people do not continue to take their own lives, but that they no longer do it exquisitely. We achieve our ends with devastating thoroughness, but, with all of our effectiveness, we are crude. The polished gesture is no more. Our crass utilitarianism has destroyed all of the fine arts, including that of suicide, and we are no longer careful that no act of life shall be more becoming us than the leaving of it. The modern designer of a suicide, like the modern builder, aims only at achieving his end. If he succeeds in getting himself dead he is satisfied, and cares nothing for the grace or beauty of the thing. As a consequence, his friends are likely to be shocked at his indelicacy, whereas, had he been an artist, his death might have added to his name a luster that no act of his life had been able to attribute.

The disgusting crudity complained of can in part be attributed to loss of caste by the act itself. Feeling that he is doing a shameful thing, the modern does it shamefully. It was not so with the Roman or Greek. He recognized in suicide a fitting end to an earthly career. To take one's leave gracefully and voluntarily seemed to him a more dignified end than to be snatched by death unwillingly away, and which of us barbarians dare question him in a matter of taste? Pliny, indeed, counted the right of self-destruction one of the most valuable of man's prerogatives, and pointed out exultingly that in that respect mortals are superior to God, who, though it is said all things are possible to Him, cannot compass His own destruction.

To the Christian must be very largely attributed the changed attitude. To him it seemed that to take one's life betrayed an unseemly haste to taste the delights of Heaven, which were not to be purchased so easily. Such precipitancy, in fact, was likely to result in his being permanently excluded from the very delights he had been so eager to enjoy, just as children are sent supperless to bed for plucking a cake before grace is pronounced.

Even had illuminating gas been known in the days of the Ptolemies, it is inconceivable that Cleopatra should have used it. Death by such a means suggests stuffy hall bedrooms and unfortunate shop girls, and is

incompatible with "immortal longings." Moreover, its use seems to betray more concern for personal ease than artistic effect, and the pursuit of mere comfort is as fatal to beauty as any of the other characteristic vices of the philistine. Cleopatra's experiments, whereby she watched the effect of different poisons on slaves, were justifiable, since it must be remembered that she was seeking not merely a relatively painless death, but one that would be in no way repulsive to the finer sensibilities. Well aware that her story was one to be acted over in countries yet unfound and accents still unknown, she was too much of an artist to spoil the effect by leaving a distorted or mutilated corpse at the end.

Her work will repay the closest analysis, for the infallible intuition of genius arranged every detail of the plan. Admiration for the instrument which she finally adopted may be regarded as a sort of touchstone. Anyone with an authentic taste in suicide will feel at once the exquisite fitness of her final choice—the asp, for such a means smacks neither of the lamp nor the laboratory, but brings one in touch at once with nature—the source of all genuine beauty. Cunningly compounded poisons would have suggested the ignoble labor of vulgar apothecaries, puttering in dirty shops, but the venom of the asp was quietly distilled in nature's alembic.

"I wish you joy of the worm," Shakespeare makes one of the servants say to her.

Evidently the spectators were regarding the catastrophe of her drama with proper aesthetic detachment.

The connoisseur can do no better than to avoid the newspaper as carefully as the lover of the drama does the contemporary stage, for he will find there nothing but accounts of performances that will shock all of his finer sensibilities. Even when poison has been employed—a method that has the sanction of the masters—he will discover that none of the finer effects possible have been achieved or, indeed, even attempted.

Socrates, involuntary though his suicide was, showed what could be done in this branch of the art. Surrounded by an audience capable of appreciating the best that he could give them, he tossed off the lethean bumper, not only like a man, but like an artist. Your modern, on the other hand, buys his vial of laudanum and, sneaking off to a corner, dies like a dog. Indeed, I am not aware that hemlock, with all its noble associations, can even be bought. No single fact could show more clearly how blind to their opportunities suicides have become.

The history of every art will reveal one supreme figure, without whom the ultimate reach of that art could never have been dreamed. Had Bach never lived, music might have meant no more than an aural titillation. Without Michelangelo the sublimity of marble and paint would never have been suspected. By the side of Michelangelo must be written Petronius Arbiter, for, as the former name stands for the perfection of the plastic and graphic arts, so does the latter for the suicidal. The great figures should be ever before us as counsels of perfection, and the story of Petronius cannot be too often told.

It is to Nero that we owe his triumph—to Nero who was, in a way, the greatest patron of this art, which during his reign and thanks to his influence flourished mightily. Yet, however much the emperor might enjoy the works of others, he himself had, as his end showed, no productive genius, and even his taste, one is inclined to suspect, was crude, so that he was likely to be content with mere bloodshed without having any just appreciation of the subtler effects. When his own time came he failed miserably, even, if we are to believe the gossipy Suetonius, ludicrously. When the news of his downfall reached him, he knew that his great opportunity had arrived, and we may be most charitable by attributing his failure to stage fright, arising from a realization of his responsibility.

"What, is it so hard to die as that?" jeered some of the guards, but even their scorn could not awaken inspiration.

Unable to persuade anybody to relieve him of the responsibility and do the deed for him, he snatched some poison (which he never used) and fled. At the last moment he attempted to drive the dagger into his throat, but lacked the courage, so that a kindhearted soldier was compelled to lend his assistance. Surely so great an opportunity was never so completely bungled. While he lived fear compelled the award of the laurel to his atrocious voice, but dead none need praise his suicide.

But let us turn to the more pleasing contemplation of a glorious success. Unfortunately, we know almost nothing of Petronius save what is told by Tacitus. Yet from the latter's laconic phrases we may infer the greatness of the Arbiter of Elegance. He was, it seems, *erudito luxu*, and spent his days in sleep in order to reserve the night for social delights, but such habits will not be held to count too severely in the estimation of an artist. For a time Nero regarded him so highly that no diversion was considered elegant unless it had received the approval of Petronius. But at length the emperor wearied of elegant inventions

just as he wearied (and this is more easily understandable) of the salutary commonplaces of Seneca. When Petronius heard that his approach to the emperor had been forbidden, he hesitated no longer, but, conscious of his ability to show the world how suicide should be accomplished, he prepared to achieve his masterpiece.

The austerity of Tacitus prevents him from fully appreciating the genius of Petronius, but a sympathetic imagination can easily reconstruct the picture from the skeleton given in the *Annals*. Gathering a few friends about him at the bath, he descended leisurely into the tepid water, and, reclining negligently, began to discourse with his companions. Casually, he drew the curved bronze razor over his wrists and lowered his arms into the water. A slender stream like crimson smoke curled upward and dispersed itself through the crystal water, which, after a time, began to blush faintly and then to grow more deeply incarnated. Being a man of pleasure, he avoided the usual death-bed topics and indulged in convivial songs and stories. From time to time he arrested the course of his too rapid dissolution by stopping the flow of blood, but, intermittent though the loss was, he gradually grew weaker and weaker, until with the breaking of the last jest and the emptying of the last bottle he was no more. Petronius Arbiter was dead, but he had left a name that is to endure as long as art is revered.

What the discerning lover of suicide will note particularly is the device by which the process of dying was prolonged. More than anything else, the repeated stopping of the blood reveals the touch of genius. The greatest limitation of our art is that its practitioners cannot appreciate their own achievements. By prolonging the process, Petronius showed how this limitation could be practically transcended. I have no desire to belittle the work of other great classical artists. There is a noble simplicity about the deaths of Cato and Brutus, and Empedocles, when he flung himself into the crater of Aetna, revealed imagination and a fine sense of theatrical effect, exhibiting the soles of his feet as the last vision he offered to the world. Still, in spite of many worthy rivals, Petronius remains The Master.

However valuable the force of a beautiful example, the too absorbed contemplation of past excellence is fraught with danger. Our ultimate purpose is to create anew, not to stop at any realization, however complete, of past accomplishment. We must make art live again; we must not decline into a sterile aestheticism. What, we must ask, can be done today? Can the golden age of suicide be revived?

Personally, my attitude is one of hope. Does not modern life offer an abundance of inducements to get away from it? Are there not as many things to escape from as there ever were? Surely, we should be no less willing to leave New York in the twentieth century than Petronius was to leave Rome in the first, for there are as many things to induce the *taedium vitae* and as many examples of the *lachrymae rerum* as there ever were.

The root of the trouble lies, as I have tried to suggest, in our attitude toward the art. Could we but escape from the feeling, born of puritanism, that the beautiful is merely one of the divisions of the sinful, we should find an increased perception of the beauty of suicide. Christianity, teaching that this world is a vale of tears, has done its best to make it such. To endure and, if necessary, create trouble is the essence of godliness, and consequently, to the austere minded, a work like that of Petronius is doubly damned, first because it got him out of trouble, and, secondly, because it is beautiful. To the aesthete, on the other hand, it is admirable for these very reasons, and just as soon as the world can be brought to a proper appreciation of aesthetic values, the creator of a pleasing suicide, instead of being regarded as merely the provider of another skeleton to be hid in the closet, will be exhibited, like a great painter or musician, as an ornament to the family tree.

Let me forestall the impertinence so often flung at the critic or connoisseur.

"Why," no doubt many of my readers have asked me with an air of triumphant finality, "don't you show us how the thing ought to be done. For," and here the triumph grows complete, "example is perhaps better than precept."

The truth of the matter is, that though I know what is good, I am bound to confess that I am not able to compass it. To achieve a perfect suicide, the artist must have completely lost interest in all that life has to offer, while I, I must admit, have grown so much interested in self-destruction that I am unable to bear the idea of joining the dead where it is no longer possible.

THE COMMON SENSE OF MONSIEUR LEBEL

by *Achmed Abdullah**

I

CONSIDER the man's name: *Paul Marie Lebel*—prosy, simple, homespun, commonsensical, and throbbing with stout burgess virtues; a name in itself, as it were, a sententious apothegm of the ultra middle classes of that grey old Paris which stretches from the Seine toward the Halles Centrales; a name as representative of that neighborhood as Cadwalader Jones is of a certain portion of Philadelphia and as George Washington Jefferson Davis Tolliver is of the dappled and piebald, though carelessly counted, G. O. P. votes of Sumter County, South Carolina.

Stout and commensensical, too, was Paul Lebel's way of living and of earning a living.

To take again the negative prototype: had he been a native of Braintree, Mass., he would have taken instinctively to clerking in a hardware store; his evening leisure would have been divided between the baseball averages and a few tomes of heavy Chautauqua *Kultur* purchased on the instalment plan; his mother would have gone in for Peruna and for the feminine pastime known as "plain tatting;" his wife would have presided over the Ladies' Auxiliary of the First Methodist-Episcopal Church and would have revelled in the less digestible poems of Browning, while his son, dreaming of the Big City, would have preferred Henry Clay Frick's autobiography to the high school Moral Reader.

Had he been a native of New York, he would have had a wife, a bull pup, a second-hand Ford, and no children; he would have been bookkeeper to a Pine Street forecloser of fancy mortgages, and he would have commuted every night on the Six Eighteen in the direction of a semi-detached Long Island villa residence which overlooked a neat network of railway steel, a pile of battered tomato tins, and a neighbor's family wash swinging in the breeze with the pompous baroque dignity peculiar to wet red flannels.

But Paul Lebel was a Parisian. His father had fought for the Com-

* Prince Abdullah, Oxford graduate, soldier, fiction writer and playwright was one of the most faithful standbys of *The Smart Set*. In his penurious days he used to sell the magazine yards of epigrams at a quarter apiece.

mune. His maternal great-great-grandmother had been one of the *tricoteuses* of the Quartier Saint Antoine who marched up to Versailles with the lovely head of the Princess Lamballe decorating the business end of a pikestaff. So he brooked no master except the duly appointed bureaucrats of the Republic and was an independent merchant who lived at the back of his six by ten shop in the Rue de Turbigo.

There he specialized in the edible variety of the genus Snail—an animal best served with cream sauce, chopped parsley and a dreamy spring whiff of garlic; an animal not as vivacious as the mussel which is dragged up from the slimy black river bed of the Seine, nor as elusive as the lark which is slain in the forests of Fontainebleau; thus an article of commerce more sane, less risky, and the financial standby of the widowed Monsieur Lebel and of his only child, Julienne.

Julienne had reached the delightful age of seventeen. She was small and round and quick; her hair was as russet as a winter apple and flecked with tiny points of gold; her eyes were grey and frank, her forehead low and broad, she had the whitest teeth in the world—and she was in love with Monsieur Hector Epernan, the headwaiter of the restaurant *La Croûte*, just around the corner from her father's shop, in the Rue Pirouette.

Hector returned Julienne's love a thousand-fold. He dreamt of the day when she should be his wife. But he, too, was sound and simple and homespun. He, too, had a hatful of common sense—and it was there that the rub came in.

For while his American prototype would have had a spark in his soul—a tiny spark through which he would attempt, though not necessarily succeed, to move mountains when the right girl happened along—the headwaiter was French; and so he was just a little calculating, very cool and clever, always sousing his hot Latin fancies in a bucket of merciless Latin common sense.

Thus he saw two things.

One was that Monsieur Lebel's tiny parlor boasted neither ormolu clock, nor terracotta bas-reliefs framed in crimson plush, nor Smyrna rug, nor crayon enlargements of ancient daguerreotypes, nor any other such evidence of solid bourgeois grandeur; that Lebel never consumed more than one *apéritif* at the restaurant *La Croûte*, that he played his evening game of four-hand manille for nominal stakes, and that his Sunday frock coat and silk hat were of ancient if well brushed architecture.

The other was that he himself was twenty-seven, that he had served his two years in the army, and that it was time for him to settle down and to become an independent and tax-paying member of society with a business of his own. And, not far from the Halles Centrales, a little café was for sale. It was the swagger resort of the Quartier; a place famed for its mulled wine, its beef *à la Bordelaise*, its Norman cheese served with sugar and clotted cream, and frequented by the hearty, well-feeding green-grocers and butchers and market-gardeners of the great Market.

Nor was the price demanded exorbitant. Thirty thousand francs would cover it—and little Julienne!—he could imagine her behind the cashier's desk, with the sun dancing through the high window in back and weaving fantastic gold patterns in her russet mane—little Julienne, jesting with the customers and taking in the money!

He would speak to Lebel. Perhaps, in spite of appearances, the latter had hidden away a stout wad of savings.

So, on his first afternoon off, he called on the snail merchant, dressed ceremoniously in full evening dress as befits a citizen of France who goes out a-courting.

II

Lebel saw. He understood at once, and he was pleased.

For he liked Hector Epernan—and as to his daughter—why, of course, she was young, only seventeen. But seventeen is past the bib-and-gingham period, after all. Seventeen costs money, what with frocks and frills and silly little shoes at twelve francs a pair.

Too, there was that charming, black-haired, plump little Claire Devereux in her two-room flat of the Rue de la Grande Truanderie; a splendid woman who adored him, but inclined to ask for things besides snails. And how was he to choose eternally between his daughter and his *petite amie*? A pair of shoes given to the one meant a scene with the other and vice versa—and the snail trade was not very lucrative—and—

Paul Lebel was like his countryman, the great Napoleon. He believed that attack was the best strategy of defense. He did not wait for Hector to state the reasons for his visit. He waved a pudgy hand benignly and winked an artful, elderly wink.

"Do not say a word, Monsieur Epernan," he said, "the black coat, the white tie, the starched shirt, the whole sympathetic mingling of

elegant finery—I understand! You adore my daughter—and I,” here he shook the other’s hand, “I am glad of it—by the name of the ten thousand pale-blue rabbits! Marry her, my boy!”

He was about to give his parental blessing and had already pointed his lips to bestow a parental kiss, when the headwaiter regained his common sense. He made a little gesture with thumb and second finger and reinforced the gesture by whispering: “And as to financial arrangements, Monsieur—”

Lebel behaved exactly as if he had received a tragic and mortal shock. He breathed hard. He opened wide his china-blue eyes. He clutched his neat beard with the fingers of his left hand.

“Financial arrangements?” he wailed. “Money—between you, my boy, and me?” and when the other inclined his head he continued in a low voice, “Alas! the snail trade is not booming. It gives me a living—a fair living—I will not deny—but no more.”

He paused; then, seeing the look on the other’s face and thinking at the same moment of little, black-haired Claire, he continued quickly:

“Monsieur, youth is a golden and brave-clanking thing!”—he pronounced this with the rousing accents of Guitry himself. “Monsieur, I, too, married when I was your age. I married the late Madame Lebel, a woman loyal, handsome, capable—a woman who could stuff the hind-leg of a tender rabbit with truffles and chestnuts and chives in a manner which would have caused the famed chef Joseph to faint with envy! But, Monsieur, I married this jewel of a woman though she did not possess a single centime. I, Monsieur, had a heart—I had courage—I was a man and a Frenchman!”

He did not mention the fact that a massive cudgel poised significantly in the brawny fist of the late Madame Lebel’s blacksmith brother had been an added incentive for his marriage. The headwaiter knew it, too, for he was a native of the Quartier and familiar with its gossip and rumors and scandals; but both gentlemen agreed silently to overlook the omission.

Instead Hector shook his head. He spoke of his ambitions, of the little café. In other words, he demanded a dowry—thirty thousand francs. Otherwise—though his heart was beneath the adorable little feet of Mademoiselle Julienne—*enfin*—a gesture pregnant with regret of the most bitter!

Lebel switched his tactics. He tried the sting of hidden insults, spiced with the picturesque sarcasm of Paris. He mentioned casually that a

man who marries for money is a sacred type with the morals of an eel and the sympathetic character of an angleworm—an especially fat and ungainly angleworm! He opined that such a man's heart was a scenic depravity and that his soul was made of brown, squidgy, malevolent mud. He compared such a man to a pig-tailed rat, to a cross between a hyena and a hippopotamus, and also to a cursed cooking-stove—but the headwaiter remained as adamant as his starched shirt front. He, too, had common sense; and so he left Monsieur Lebel, a victim to groping, bitter reflection.

Lebel sighed. His thoughts turned from bitterness to brooding, self-pitying melancholia and presently, as always in such moments, they began to revolve around the memory of Madame, his late wife—around her sterling character, her courage, her massive brain power. If only she had lived to see this day! She would have found a way out of this annoying dilemma—a way to force the mercenary headwaiter's hand!

Lebel shed a few tears. Ah, yes—the late Madame!—he had loved and respected her in spite of the brawny blacksmith brother's persuasive cudgel. During her lifetime there had been no need of any Madame Claire—blonde, or brown, or red-haired. She had been such a sensible woman—thought Lebel—why, she had been the sort to hear the grass grow and the fleas cough: so sharp and keen and clever! There was no headwaiter who could have held out before her superior wit—and Lebel opened his watch and looked at the little half-faded photograph of her which adorned the inside of the case.

A handsome woman she had been: big and dark and with just that suspicion of pout to her upper lip which gives zest to a kiss. How lifelike she looked—thought Monsieur Lebel, turning the little photograph to the light—with that coil of raven hair above her broad, white forehead, the smile curling the corners of her lips, the small, straight nose with the well-carved nostrils, the merry twinkle in the deep chasm of her eyes . . . and the rope of imitation pearls accentuating the curve of her magnificent, statuesque neck!

He smiled.

Somehow, he could never separate her memory from these pearls. Imitation pearls, imitation jewelry of all sorts, had been her one vanity, her one foible.

He remembered when she had bought her first strand of graded wax pearls.

It had been six months after their marriage. She had been out all afternoon, to a matinee at the Cirque Nouveau. She had returned very late, but she had been so happy and flushed and excited with the droleries of Foot-Tit and Chocolat, the famed clowns of the Cirque Nouveau, that he had forgiven her on the spot.

Of course he had poked fun at her when he saw the opalescent string about her neck—"imitations!" she had explained. "I picked them up in a little shop on the Rue Saint-Honoré. Twenty francs—cheap, *hein?*"—and when he had replied that twenty francs were twenty francs and that he himself disliked pinchbeck, she had answered that she adored jewels.

"But these pearls are false!"

"And what difference does that make?" she had demanded; "it is not the value which I love, but the beauty, the richness of color and form. They are imitations—good—what of it? You could not tell them from originals, and even the great ladies of the Faubourg wear them. They keep their real pearls and diamonds in steel vaults"—and he had laughed and kissed her.

It gave her pleasure, he had thought, and so, through the years that followed, she had bought many a piece: imitation pearls and diamonds and emeralds and rubies. She must have gradually spent between eight and nine hundred francs on them—and then an idea came to Monsieur Lebell!

The jewels were upstairs in the garret, in the late Madame's trunk. Here was at least a beginning. He would surely be able to sell them for two or three hundred francs, a sum of money sufficient to give Julianne a trousseau of the finest. The headwaiter would see—he would admire—he would wonder—he would say to himself that a man who could spend so much money on a trousseau had doubtless a tidy fortune saved up somewhere, and since he seemed too stingy to give a fair share of it to his daughter as dowry there was always hope for the future.

He would cultivate a racking cough—complain about his heart—allude to his fear that he was not long for this world—

Ah!—there was still hope. Julianne would yet become Madame Hector Epernan, and there would be an end to the regrettable scenes with the little Claire in the matter of shoes at twelve francs a pair.

*"V'la les dos, viv'nt les dos!
C'est les dos les gros,
Les beaux—"*

gaily hummed Paul Lebel as he hurried up to the garret, where he found the trunk amidst a dusty litter of broken furniture, and opened the rusty, creaking lock.

The lid swung up and he paused momentarily. This was the first time since his wife's death that he had opened her trunk, and an aroma rose from it—slightly musty, but still sweet—ambered lavender and verbena: the scents which she had loved and used.

Again a warm wave of sentiment surged through Monsieur Paul Lebel. He came near to closing the trunk without searching for the jewels. Then his common sense boomed up massively. There was Julianne. There was Hector Epernan. And there was Claire!—and he groped in the top tray, with a faint rustling and swishing and crackling as his fingers swept through the mass of crushed silk and linen and ribbons and presently he found what he was after: a little box filled to the brim with a shimmering, glittering, coiled mass of many colors—gold and red and white and yellow and blue.

III

Five minutes later, he was facing old Monsieur Isidore Carcassonne in his little jewelry shop on the Rue Pirouette.

He threw the gleaming lot on the counter.

"How much, Père Isidore?" he asked, with a happy smile.

Slowly Isidore Carcassonne inserted his magnifying glass in his right eye.

He picked up the baubles one by one, examined them, looked at his customer, examined them again without saying a word and reached for scale and pincers and acid bottle to make certain tests; then he called to his assistant, who was working in the back of the shop, talked to him at length and in a whisper, and finally asked Lebel where he had got the jewels.

"Why, Père Isidore," replied Lebel, "they belonged to the late Madame Lebel. She had the devil's own hankering for these bits of colored glass—"

"Colored glass?" cut in Carcassonne. "Why, *mon pauvre petit*—these are genuine! Every one of them!" and when Lebel, deathly pale, clutched the edge of the counter for support and seemed unable to pronounce a single word, the other continued vehemently, "Yes—they are genuine—and I offer you . . . wait"—he talked again to his clerk, picked up the jewels, held them to the light, measured and weighed and figured and re-figured—"fifty thousand francs!" he exclaimed sud-

denly, "not a centime more—and you must give me until Saturday to raise the money!"

Lebel sucked in his breath.

There was a dry rasp at the back of his throat.

Fifty thousand francs!—he understood at once.

His wife—the late respected Madame—she . . . ah—these things had been presents, doubtless from some rich man—she . . .

He picked up the glistening mass—the color-shouting facets seemed to mock him, to jeer at him. He was about to crush them—to throw them away—and then again, as from a great distance, he heard Isidore Carcassonne's creaking voice—"fifty thousand francs! Not another centime!"—and, quite suddenly, he smiled. God be praised, he thought, he was a man of stout, solid common sense—and Madame was dead, and he was alive! And so was Juliennne—and Hector Epernan—and Claire, the little black-haired Claire.

There was the future.

"Good!" he turned to Carcassonne, "fifty thousand francs—I accept—but wait, wait!" he picked up a beautiful ring, a double snake with two cabochon emeralds. "I shall keep this ring for myself—there are—ah—sentimental memories connected with it!"—and, after some haggling, Isidore Carcassonne agreed and gave Monsieur Lebel a receipt for the jewels, asking him to come Saturday for the money.

Lebel left the shop, and, humming to himself, with a youthful, springy step, he swung down the street.

Arrived at the corner, he took the ring from his waistcoat pocket and looked at it.

That little black-haired Claire, he thought—always had she wanted a beautiful ring. She would be happy and grateful. She would kiss him. She would call him her little creampuff, and her little fat adored doggie-doggie—and . . .

"*Scrognieugnieu!*" thought Monsieur Lebel, wafting a tender kiss in the direction of Heaven, the late Madame!—she had been so clever and sharp and keen. She had helped him during life—and now she helped him even beyond the grave!

And happy, smiling, Monsieur Lebel hailed a passing cab and asked the driver to hurry—"Number Fifteen, Rue de la Grande Truanderie!"

Bon sang!—he was rich—he could afford to loll about in cabs!—and, as the wheels carried him toward the tiny, perfumed nest of plump little Claire Devereux, he thought gratefully of his wife—the late, lamented Madame Lebel.

CASTE

by Burton Rascoe

ERIC SEWARD, having finished the article he was reading, dropped the magazine to the floor, lighted a cigarette, and then, noting for the fiftieth time that the furniture arrangement in the room did not suit him, telephoned the club clerk to send up some one to change it.

"The fellow's absolutely right," he said aloud to the room's vacancy and with vehemence. Eric occasionally permitted himself the pleasure of an audible commitment when no one else was about. The fellow who was absolutely right was Bernard Shaw, and the matter he was absolutely right about was the desirability of giving natural selection a free hand.

If, say (as Shaw in a fashion put it), a mentally and financially solvent young man of mateable physique should, while walking down the street, encounter a comely young woman who was unknown to him and obviously from a different circle from that in which he moved, the young man should, if a vital impulse directed, go straight up to that young woman and claim her for his own.

Eric had seen a young woman on the street that very morning whom he had particularly wanted to claim for his own. It annoyed him to reflect that he had been checked in his impulse by these class distinctions, which, as Shaw revealed, were artificial, and by these conventions, which as Shaw pointed out, were archaic—and by the municipal anti-flirting law, about which Eric had his own opinions.

"Damn outrageous nonsense," he reiterated with equal vehemence and to the same vacancy—having especially in mind the municipal anti-flirting law: "No wonder the race is degenerating. Need more fellows like Shaw to shake them up."

The "them" were visualized for a moment in the back of his mind as a crêpe-draped set of meddling old men who framed—and sent good-looking policewomen on the streets to enforce—a law which was manifestly inimical to the best interests of the race. That they chose well-formed and pretty women and did not identify them as of the constabulary with uniforms and badges, he esteemed as particularly heinous.

His irritation served as a stimulus to literary composition and he was

about to address himself to the wording of a protest which should be printed under his full name (if it sounded logical) and under his reversed initials (if he were in doubt about it) in the correspondence column of the leading paper—when he heard a rap at the door

"Come in!"

Joe, one of the club porters, a blond, squarely built, high-cheek-boned youth, came in and, under Eric's direction, set about moving a lounge and bookshelves, a desk and chairs into a pattern more appealing to Eric's vague aesthetic sensitivity

"Well, Joe, how's tricks?" asked Eric, when the task was under way

He had frequently chatted with Joe as man to man (they were of an age) when Joe was engaged in work about his rooms, and he had drawn Joe out on various subjects, one of them being women. Eric's curiosity in this field of research, one is happy to record, was not so limited as his experience

Eric knew that Joe had two sisters who were tentatively engaged as waitresses downstairs as an experiment while the club waiters were on strike. This information he had come about in a routine sort of way, but his eye had told him that one of these sisters was wholly unattractive, rather blowsy, in fact, and the other quite personable indeed. Eric had, of course, observed this latter sister only cursorily and discreetly but he had remarked an involuntary appreciable difference in the tone and inflection he used when he said, "And I'll have my coffee now, please," to the pretty one and in the tone and inflection he used when he said precisely the same words to the less appetizing sister.

"Fine, sir," answered Joe with that grin which always had secretly annoyed Eric because he could see no occasion for it—he knew Joe was not especially stupid—and which he failed to attribute to embarrassment. The grin made Eric feel uncomfortably conscious that Joe might have something on him, some peccadillo, some observation he had made while piddling about the rooms, which he, Eric, would hate to have generally known. Perhaps Joe had seen the salutation of an unfinished letter lying on the desk, or disapproved of the colour of his pajamas, or thought the things girls had written on their photographs were silly, or had got into his collection of *La Vie Parisienne*.

... But perhaps Joe considered him a sly, gay dog and this grin was an admiring tribute to his prowess, hinting at difficult conquests and luxurious bacchanals. . . . Still, that grin was irritating. . . .

On the lapel of Joe's uniform jacket there was a small white feather which had excited Eric's curiosity now going on five months.

Eric again found himself scrutinizing this feather with a nebulous sort of perplexity and wonderment. The first time he had noticed it Eric assumed that it was only a day's vanity on Joe's part. And when Joe kept on wearing it, he decided it must be some kind of identification, like a taxi driver's license tag or a gas collector's badge, proclaiming Joe among his brethren as a member of the porter's union or at all events as a licensed scullion. But he had seen Joe on the street one Sunday, and Joe had had on his best suit, and in the buttonhole the white feather rested conspicuously. And he could not imagine a good-looking young fellow like Joe announcing by his buttonhole, as he promenaded on his Sabbatical inspection of ankles, that he was a member in good standing of the porter's union.

He had wanted to ask Joe what the feather was for, but somehow that did not seem the seemly thing to do. He could ask Keith Webster what that dingus on his watchfob was or ask Lancy Savage what the crest meant on his enormous ring; but he couldn't bring himself to ask Joe what that feather was for. . . . Then, what he had just read suddenly occurred to him and simultaneously occurred, "Damn outrageous nonsense!" this time inaudibly.

"Joe, I don't like to seem impertinent. But would you mind telling me what that feather in your lapel signifies?"

"This?" asked Joe, looking at the feather and then at Eric, the while holding the lapel out for easier inspection. "You mean what this feather is for?"

"Yes, if you don't mind telling me."

"White Falcon, sir."

This answer seemed to satisfy Eric for a moment; but it occurred to him that the White Falcon was as great an enigma as the former one. His curiosity had been laid, and then again it hadn't. If he let Joe go, he would be wondering for another four months what a White Falcon is. And certainly no one among his intimates could tell him. Again Shaw gave him courage.

"But, Joe, do you mind telling me what a White Falcon is or are? Is it a fraternity, a sodality, a union, a decoration, a club, an honour society, or an anti-cigarette pledge?"

"*Poliska*," answered Joe and grinned, for he knew that Eric would be flattered: Eric had been trying to pick up some stray Polish from him,

and, after conscientious drilling had acquired two expressions, "*Polska*" and "*dobyjcie-mu-tak*" to a degree which might be called fluency

"A Polish society?" asked Eric

"Yes, sir "

"And what do you do?"

"We drill."

"For anything in particular or just to be drilling, like a Knight of Pythias?"

"No sir, we are going to free Poland

"Oooey! From whom?" Here, indeed, thought Eric, was an interesting situation, an adventurer right in his own room, in the person of a quite ordinary appearing porter

"From Russia We are getting together all over the country soldiers and money to free Poland "

(Forgive me, please, if I have hitherto omitted to record that all this took place a year or so before the war—before the council at Versailles relieved Joe and his compatriots of their noble responsibility And, too, possibly, I have failed to make it entirely clear that Eric was then a very young man, yet in college, and with a decent allowance)

"And, do you have meetings and all that sort of thing?"

"Yes, sir We are going to have one tonight "

"Tonight, tonight, tonight," mumbled Eric more to himself than to Joe.

He was pondering whether he had anything to do that night Moreover, he was consumed at the moment with an ardent desire to be present at that meeting of men who were going to free Poland from Russia He fancied it would be like eavesdropping at an anarchist plot to overthrow the government, a dangerous enterprise like spying upon the sinister doings of fiery-eyed assassins But Eric approved Nietzsche's dictum 'Live dangerously,' though he had not to date, unhappily, been afforded a convenient opportunity further to sanction the dictum by deeds

Possibilities occurred to him in cinematographic order Even if Joe should consent to smuggle him past the guards, he would, doubtless, have to learn an incredibly difficult set of pass-words in an impossible space of time And then, if he should fail, instant death! If he blundered by so much as a misplaced consonant or a false guttural, he would be

recognized, his throat would be cut, probably, and his body thrown into the river. . . . There were many things he had wanted to do in life. . . . His technique with Louise had proved faulty. . . . He had been delegated to the fraternity convention next June. . . . Waldron still owed him that money. . . . He ought to leave a note telling where he was going. His father surely would set an investigation afoot, and his murderers might be discovered, and the plot to free Poland would go up the spout. But that would be little consolation to a young man with a slit throat, floating down the river. Still . . . "Live dangerously."

"I suppose it would be quite impossible for you to take me along tonight, wouldn't it?"

"No," and Joe grinned. "You can go 'long if you want to. We dance and have big time. You want to go 'long?"

Eric jumped up and, overjoyed at the prospect of attending a secret meeting to free Poland without any danger to himself, began pumping Joe as to what he would be required to wear, when the thing took place, and where he was to meet Joe.

II

At eight o'clock Eric stood on the street corner which Joe had designated. To tell the truth, he was a trifle disappointed in the prospects for the evening.

After all, he mused, this plot (it had ineradicably become a plot in his mind), this plot, it seems is not up to much snuff if any outsider can attend the conclaves without encountering difficulties. But then, one couldn't tell; possibly Joe felt faith in him, entertained a conviction that Eric would not report the meeting to the police. It was a flattering conclusion. He had, no doubt, the type of face that inspires confidence. But was that a wholly desirable trait? Some doctors have it. And doctors are rather to be envied certain secrets. And priests. But weren't there some disadvantages in being the recipient of confessions? . . . No matter, Joe had trusted him, and not a word should escape his lips.

He was turning these thoughts over in his mind when he espied Joe crossing the street in his direction. Amazement overcast him when he perceived that Joe was *bringing his sisters along with him!* A fine sort of secret conclave if women were to be tagging along—and the thought died in his mind; for at that moment he remarked that Joe's younger

sister was quite unbelievably lovely and that her taste in dress was curious, but irreproachable. Here before him stood a very caressing assembly of crisp starchings and fluffy web laces, black silk hose and black shoes, the pinkest of pink complexion, hair the colour of burnished bronze, a soft flexible mouth, and eyes which it occurred to Eric, though he had never seen a doe, were doe-like, meaning thereby that they were tender and appealing and confiding and whatnot.

And to the other side loomed Theresa, whose physical shortcomings it is unpleasant to recount.

"I see you here, all right," said Joe. "This my sister Theresa; that my sister Theka. We catch that car coming yonder."

It seemed not to matter that Joe had forgotten to mention Eric's name because neither of the girls had said a word during the informal formality. Theresa had giggled. Eric was relieved to observe that Theka had not.

After they had boarded the street car, Eric was reminded that he did not know Joe's last name and in consequence must perforce, if he mentioned her by name at all, call Theka Theka. And the idea did not displease him. He did not need to be reminded that on this ride he was going to sit by Theka, even if he had to throw Joe and Theresa out of the car. That was a hyperbole which occurred to him; fortunately there was no need to do so, since the feat would have been quite beyond him.

En route Eric had, by way of preliminaries, begun an amiable and spirited and desultory monologue. It was about himself, of course, for his age precluded that. Then for variety he began asking questions. He was puzzled at first that whatever the question Theka answered him only by a nod or shake of the head, looking at him meanwhile with eyes which gave him strange promptings and a smile that he found subtly satisfying.

"The poor child doesn't know any English," he thought, "No, that can't be. She can take orders well enough and explain about the cooking. But maybe, it's only bill-of-fare English. What I am saying is over her head. Still, good God! I can't make conversation out of fillets and chops and cocoa and soup. This is no place to ask her what desserts she would recommend today."

And so he rode the last third of the journey in silence, rather boastful inwardly at having so delectable a creature at his side and wondering what Lancy and Keith would think of her. This line of speculation had carried him so far afield that by the time Joe came forward to tell

him that they had reached the meeting hall, he had dismissed Theka altogether.

They climbed two flights of stairs to a large auditorium, wherein was a glorious din of throaty voices, hearty laughter, scraping of chairs and scraping of catgut. At a long table were seated what Eric took to be the leaders in the "plot," the center figure of which was a florid-faced Silenus with a mass of black hair. To his side were several smart young men in light blue uniforms with red and black trimmings. They were not, apparently, plotting at the moment, but were drinking beer out of huge tumblers. Eric presently became aware that the chief plotter was, if not drunk, at all events in an expressive mood. At intervals he would bawl, "*Vivat Polska!*" in a most disturbing basso profundo. And the entire gathering would take it up.

On a platform in the rear of the room some fifty girls in khaki uniform sat at prim attention, not a little self-conscious. Since Eric saw no men, except the officers, in uniform, he wondered, not unwarrantably, if the women were going to free Poland from Russia. Joe, who had disappeared, came back with four large glasses of beer, which Theresa and Theka and Eric and himself thereupon drank, Eric with a trifle of uneasiness.

While Joe was returning the empty glasses, a violent bedlam broke loose to be concluded by leaving a large floor space vacant, after which the orchestra began a waltz.

Eric watched the others dance for a moment—balloon-bustled women and thickset men,—and he beckoned to Theka. The music was somewhat different from that he had been used to, but he managed decently even from the first and Theka followed him with surprising grace. Consciousness of his step was succeeded by consciousness that there snuggled to him a soft bundle of warm femininity and a tingling took place within him. They ended the dance reluctantly.

Eric gave silent thanks when events made it unnecessary to relinquish Theka to take into his arms the unpretty Theresa. The four of them stood in a corner while a pale young man with a falsetto voice announced something which Eric later divined to be a drill by the girls. These martially clad young women executed their maneuvers with skill and Eric found it pleasant entertainment: there were curves which struck him as exceptionally symmetrical.

In the periodic general scramble which followed the drill as it had followed the dance, Eric gazed about the room and suddenly felt his

pulse increase. For, coming toward him, was what he was instantly convinced was the most beautiful girl he had ever laid eyes on. She was dark, lithe, self-assured, with lips that were puckered bits of scarlet velvet and eyes whose glance was a caress. She passed near him and he stared after her. Then, turning to Joe abruptly, he asked:

"Who is that pretty girl, Joe? I should like to meet her."

At that moment he lost whatever answer Joe gave him, because his left hand, which was resting on a chair back, was grasped by a soft hand in a convulsive grip. He turned and looked into eyes in which were mingled despair and the tremulous hope of desperation. They were eyes in which moistless tears lurked—and adoration. They were Theka's.

"Come," she said quickly, "Weel you please, come queek wif me. For a moment, please."

She hurried on out of the door ahead of him and he followed, followed her down the first flight of stairs to the landing. There she waited for him in the dim light. She put her hands on his shoulders and grasped the lapels of his coat.

"Come, walk wif me, please. You weel not meet that girl tonight, weel you? Not tonight, please. I ask you, not tonight. Any night, tomorrow night, not tonight. Tell me, please you weel not, weel you? She ees no good. She got husband already. She got playnta fellows. She ees engaged. Her sweetheart a beeg man. He keel you queek like that."

This incoherent and inconsistent speech dumfounded Eric. He had never been beseeched that way before in his life, nor had any woman ever looked at him in such a manner. He felt tenderness and compassion and even love; but, it occurred to him, that this was not inevitably the sort of place to show it, with other people likely to descend upon him at any moment or some late comer to encounter them on the steps. He took her arm, patted her shoulder, and led her down into the street. The building was at an intersection of streets, one of which was a well-lighted suburban business thoroughfare and the other was less well lighted. He directed her into the latter.

Theka clung to his arm and began shortly.

"Leesen, I luf you, I luf you, I luf you. Only tonight, mebbe, but I luf you. You be mine, tonight, won't you. My fella, please. You don't want to see that other girl tonight, do you? Tell me no. Please tell me no. You breck my heart eef you spik to her. I luf you."

The entreaty died into a plaint and then into an almost inaudible sob.

Eric was visibly and pertinently affected. He hastily considered what was best to be done under the circumstances and decided that it would not be amiss if he put his arms around the girl and reassured her—and, if this venture was successful, he might kiss her.

The which he presently did. And when her soft, moist lips touched his and clung there Eric experienced those physiological phenomena which mankind has immemorially accounted among its most exquisite pleasures, and which, in the springtime of youth, one does not grow weary of repeating, provided the variety is sufficient. At all events, Eric's faculties soon assembled in cogitable order, which enabled him to a sense of the awkwardness of being encountered while kissing a passively limp figure in the middle of the sidewalk. A policeman was turning the corner.

* * *

"No, sir, I can get the girls home all right."

"Well, thank you, Joe, for a very delightful evening."

Eric lifted his hat, whistled lightly as he walked to the corner, and hailed a taxicab.

III

That night Eric lay awake all of half an hour, pondering lost opportunities, unpropitious circumstances and kindred regrets and fell at last asleep, happy in the memory of the suffusing warmth of Theka's lips.

The next morning he was up early. He took a very hot bath. And then he took a very cold one. He examined twelve shirts and eight ties, and, after some deliberation, decided upon his blue cheviot suit. Then he spent an unconscionable time in shaving and dressing. A timidity and a cold fear seized him as he closed the door behind him and strode toward the elevator. His hand trembled as he pressed the button.

"The grill, sir?" asked the elevator operator, hesitating a moment at that floor.

"No, all the way down." Eric had decided to breakfast at the hotel across the street.

In the lobby he met Lancy Savage.

"Hello! How are you, old boy? Just going up for a bite of breakfast. Eaten yet?"

Eric answered in the negative before he had time to check himself, and then, wishing that morning, of all mornings, to avoid the grill, he said, "I was just thinking of eating across the street. Just for a change."

"Nonsense. Come on upstairs. Eats here are as good as any you can get elsewhere, and you can sign your check."

And two minutes later Eric was following Lancy to a table.

Theka was not to be seen, and Eric sat down with a greater feeling of casiness, and with a comforting hope.

When, however, he had looked over the card, he glanced up and saw Theka emerging from the swinging doors which led to the kitchen. She bore a laden tray in front of her. She looked serene and bright and pretty, but, somehow, Eric wished she weren't there. She served adroitly at the table and, having finished that task, looked about for more stomachs to conquer. She espied Lancy and Eric at the table and came tripping daintily, unswervingly toward them. Eric looked only long enough to observe that there was coolness and remoteness and a business-like servility in her manner.

In a moment she was hovering over Eric's shoulder. Her hand reached out to flip away a crumb in front of Eric. He was appalled an hour later when he recalled that he had wanted nothing so much as to grasp that hand.

"Have you ordered, sir?"

SUMMER THUNDER

by Stephen Vincent Benét

I

THE nature of Justice is a thing that has always interested me. I have had more time than most to consider it, perhaps, for I have been a cripple as long as I can remember, and the best the specialists have been able to do for me is to cushion more comfortably my rolling-chair or show the nurse an easier way of lifting me to it from my bed and back again. But reading and the sparkle of thought in the mind, the twisting search of the diver for Truth in the ink-pool of Experience,

the dead-leaf quietude of the spirit in the ceaseless millrace of Contemplation—these have been mine illimitably.

Also the sight from each window of this house of the ragged Maine landscape, bitter and starving, where the bones of the rock push through the earth from uneasy spring to thick long winter, white as a bear. Every window alters the picture a little, like various men discussing one woman, but the lines and the strength and the harshness—they are the same forever and ever. I know them by heart like a ballad now, yet like a ballad there is now and then some word of the ground, some feature of the forest of whose meaning I can never be entirely sure. And any pine or hillock can summon generations of shadows and memories to the roll of a phantom drum.

That straggling circle of stones up the slope of the hill, for instance, beside the black tree that looks like a broken Y. There aren't many besides myself who would think of it as a court of Justice—of that Justice we are all of us seeking, I tell you. But I saw a true cause tried there with every circumstance of argument, until judgment was fully given. Not exactly in accordance with our notions of law, perhaps, but the verdict has never been appealed. And it is more than six years this summer since Rafe Batchelder and Lucius Hewitt went up there to plead their cases.

These little stagnant counties of north Maine—they're like a pool that has been damned too long. Clear on the surface, possibly—looking as easy to read and understand as a sentence set up in capitals—but just stir up the bottom with a stick once or twice and see what comes floating to the surface! The people are inbred, curious; the headstrong, the lively, the heedless moved away from here twenty years ago. You have only to look around you to find as many queer, suppressed, lopsided characters as there are knots in a bad piece of wood. They still seem to have that lean, hard stamina—it's the best thing the Pilgrims gave them, and it dies almost as hard as it lived—but even that is wearing thin in places. Especially over the nerves. Coffee and pie and the frying-pan—the weather and the rocks under the plough—they've forced your native pure-stock American who hadn't the courage to go West right up to the borderline between just "queerness" and insanity, until sometimes he quite forgets and steps over it completely. There are stories in old yellow newspapers and the stilted style of the eighties that make the ways of the House of Atreus seem commonplace. And for myself, I have seen what I have seen.

Rafe Batchelder was a strong man with something wrong in him. It's like looking at a big elm with rot inside it: you may not be sure what the matter is at first, but you are very sure the thing is bound to fall. He had a kind of fair, collic-like good looks—though he was fat for them. But if you ever took hold of his arm or shook hands with him you knew there was iron under the fat.

He was twenty-five or so at the time this happened—quite a prosperous fellow. Brought up on his father's farm here, good with a boat, he had worked at one of the big summer resorts for three years after his father died. The last two winters a New York broker who took a fancy to him had shipped him down to Florida to run his cruising launch. But there had been some trouble or other and now Rafe was back on the farm. Industrious—saved quite a bit of money—had had an offer from one summer resort already (this was March and he had only been back since January)—but he said he was through with working for other people, that he wanted to rest and work for himself. Though what rest he could find in Maine farming—but that wasn't for me to say. At any rate, there he was—you can see some of his fields from the window.

Lucius Hewitt was another kind of flesh entirely, a dark, slight, pleasant little chap. His father had been the village storekeeper and killed himself with patent medicines. So Lucius had hired out to the Batchelders—the old crow of a mother and a slip-shoe niece ran the farm while Rafe was away—and kept his mother and his girl first cousin alive on less than a pine can wring from stones. But the whole Hewitt cottage was as clean and bare as a plate, and the neighbours used to help, as Maine does, with a free hand and a salty tongue.

Everallen Strong, the girl cousin, would wash dishes or help cook in haying time, and they paid her what they could, which wasn't much. Everallen was a singular being. I have never seen anybody who gave quite the same impression of having strayed into the world from a dream.

It was not that she was beautiful, exactly, though I think I have seen her as beautiful as it is permitted a human thing to be; it was that she was separate, that she seemed to have no more connection with the every-day affairs of life than a cloud might have with the turbulence of a city or a crocus with the machinery of a train. Rafe Batchelder, on occasion, convinced you of the existence of positive evil; Everallen made you waver into the belief of a middle world, a world of phantas-

magoria, a shadowy borderland of consciousness filled with good elves and nursery tales. She was uniquely alone. I have never beheld another creature like her.

I use the word "creature" advisedly—she seemed as happy in her loneliness, as much apart from crude mankind as wind. She was olive-dusky, slim as a young apple tree. Her eyes were the most distant and yet warmly untroubled things in the world. She was quite nineteen, and Lucius was her friend and counselor by virtue of three more years. To the casual they seemed much the same age. At least Rafe called Lucius "that boy" once when, returning from Florida, he found him working on the Batchelder farm, and, seeing it stung a trifle, took curious pains to do so again.

It had been a set winter and a slow spring, and the pain that comes down on me like a hand now and then had been ungenerously frequent in calling. So, until the ice of the year broke up in a great sluicing thaw at the middle of April, I could only get news by hearsay of the hangman's knot in which these three lives I have talked about were already so crookedly tangled. But Mrs. Ventor, my housekeeper-nurse, would drop me little flakes of gossip now and then through lips pursed up in virtue. The Hewitts had always been friends of hers, and Rafe Batchelder she hated healthily.

"He ain't right," she would throw at me. "He ain't right!"—and then stop when I tried to question her. But one day she went farther. "Ever since that business with the dog—" she deigned to add as a footnote.

By degrees I got the story out of her. It was a common enough tale, God knows, a stray cur, a half-grown lout, a dirty little piece of cruelty done with the causeless ferocity of the stupid. But the way she told it chilled me a little. She ended, her voice drooping into horror.

"And they found the little dog with his throat tore up, in that bunch of trees on the hill there. And they say Rafe did it with—"

But that I dismissed as improbable, as well as certain curious, formless hints at what seemed to taste of ritual sacrifice.

It is true superstition fades slowly from the pastures, and even the scientific farmer says a few words unconsciously now and then that were once propitiation against terror, and goes through certain acts, knows not why, which, if rooted back to their beginnings, will be found to resemble astonishingly acts of homage to elemental powers, strong and invisible. And Rafe was a reversion to type—and an older type than the Pilgrims.

But I had read fairly widely in folklore in my time, and a circumstance of the kind so doubtfully pointed at occurring under twentieth-century eyes seemed to strain and overpower credulity. So I put the matter out of my mind entirely, with my reasonless dislike of Rafe made a little more reasonable, that was all. It wasn't till I saw him with Everallen that I thought of Mrs. Ventor's hints again.

II

It was a day in high April, wet and steamy, with the earth a soaking brown under the slush. My chair was wheeled up here to the window. I could see the fence and the path and the slope with the stones beyond.

Everallen came up this way from the Batchelders' with one of those splint-baskets on her arm. She had been doing some work there, I suppose. Her walk was like a grave dance of thistle-down; it was plain that she belonged to the Spring. Again in her motions, in the singing toss of her head, I caught the character of something unearthly. She was as happy as a young wave under a cloudless sky—but when Rafe came squelching through the stubble there and crossed over to meet her at the pasture-bars, she sank back into vague earthiness at once; it was as if someone had blown out a flame in her.

She tried to slip by him with a word, but he stopped her. They were both of them utterly unconscious of me—people have got used by this time to thinking of me as just a blank of face at a window, a blank that smiles if you nod to it. But I happen to have practised a little lip-reading for diversion now and then, so I knew more of them than they thought. Though at first I followed their talking unconsciously.

"Wait a minute!" said Rafe. "Where you going?"

"Home." She jerked her head defensively.

"Wait, then. You and me's to have a talk."

Like Apollyon he straddled all across the way.

With an indescribable gesture that made you think of a tired bird, she dropped the basket, clasped her hands on the fence-rail.

"Well?" she said, without turning her head toward him.

He said something I couldn't catch, but her answer was obviously "No."

There followed a rapid interchange of short phrases where I caught only broken words: "Night—the whiny son of a fool—up by the Circle."

Then he turned and said something so slowly and carefully that I

received the full impact of the abominable sentence. I hurt my nails on the chair arm. It was as brutal and deliberate as a thrown clod. Along the splintered rail of the fence his hand crept toward hers like a snail, and, like a snail, it was wet and glistening.

She seemed horribly unsure for a moment, weak, shaken, as if the words were earth crushing down on her. Then all her eeriness came about her like magic.

"No!" she said; and I have never seen such contempt on lips again. She would only waste that much clean speech on him.

And she was walking, not running, walking slowly away from him with his face like the mask of an Indian devil. And she was past the window and round the corner and, for a heart-stopping instant, I thought he would follow. But he just stood and bellowed after her with the anger like dirty scarlet in his voice.

"It'll be yes some day, Everallen! It'll be yes some day, you—" and he ran off suddenly into filth and stopped and stood switching his boot with a twig and glaring, till finally he marched off toward his stable. I was sorry for his horses when I thought of them. Then I sank back slowly in my chair again, and I think I must have fainted for a time. At least what I next remember is Mrs. Ventor bending over me.

I wondered just what I could do. North Maine is not like a city—any charges I could bring—who would believe them? And to whom could I present what evidence there was?

Two days later, when that bearded caricature, the town sheriff, dropped in to talk to me interminably, I hinted to him what I had heard. He was not surprised—that was clear—but we both of us knew the country and the people and he wouldn't take it seriously at all—said Rafe was a loose-mouthed bully, but he'd stopped annoying the girl now and she was keeping out of his way. If he heard any more about it he would take steps, of course—and so on.

Meanwhile, he thought Lucius Hewitt was the best man to stand up to Rafe. I was unconvinced, but didn't say so—I couldn't blame him—he hadn't seen Rafe's face. But, after the manner of mortals, I dreamed and let the matter drift. And for more than a month nothing happened, and I began to think the sheriff must be right.

III

The third factor, and X of the equation, Lucius Hewitt, did not happen to come within range of my windows till late in May. You

have no idea what a curious effect my viewing the story by little snatches of scenes with long gaps between, filled in by the muddled loquacity of Mrs. Ventor, produced. It was like seeing disconnected flashes of moving picture, lacking titles or explanations, with only naked intuition to set circumstances in their proper relation to each other. But this much I was able to gather in the intervening seven weeks or so.

Rafe was badgering Hewitt intensively. There was a series of petty persecutions. You may have seen a mischievous child prick and plague a perfectly well-disposed and quiet cat till the animal spits and shows claws. It was not a matter of actual physical bullying; Rafe rose over Lucius like a mountain, he could have broken him between his hands. It was more a constant worrying and nagging designed to drive the infuriated gentle man against the stolid violent one—to the former's inevitable destruction. There were stories of meals at the Batchelders, that must have salted every mouthful Lucius ate. Rafe hung over him like a weight—he carried Rafe around with him, so to speak, wherever he went, a visible and bowing oppression. And now Rafe had begun to linger by the road in the short twilight and stare at Everallen as she passed.

You may ask, why didn't Lucius go away; take Everallen away?

I think he was making up his mind to it—but this was in the days before Sarajevo—he had no money—his mother was old—where could they go? And people here are more anchored—it's like tearing a plant out of a wall to move them—unless they are unusual people.

Lucius was not at all unusual—a nice lad with the pith of a man in him—that was all. Why didn't he try to marry Everallen, then—for it was obvious by this time that he loved her? It is my idea that he was still in the first stage of love—not yet accustomed to that shock of splendour and awe that comes (and not more than once in the years) when a playmate and companion as known and friendly as bread becomes suddenly something like a burning cloud to gaze upon, and most desirable of all imagined things.

The impact of first love on a soul that has had no tutors is like the first sight of a moonrise over the ocean; it leaves no room for the pure greed of possession. And my eavesdropping on Lucius Hewitt one night showed me that this particular assumption seemed, in its essentials, fairly correct.

He was talking to Mrs. Ventor in the kitchen. I sat reading over

there by the lamp. The year had changed—it was one of May's beamy evenings. The door between the rooms was quarter-open for warmth and the companionship of human sound. The first word that came between me and my book was Mrs. Vantor's.

"Why can't you just pick up and leave then, Loosh?" in a tone of stiff concern.

I peeped over the edge of the page. His shadow was all I could see of him. It was bent over like a man in pain.

There was a long mutter of explanation from the shadow.

"Well, I'd kill him!" Her voice rose sharply. I could hear the whack of her hand on the bread-board.

The reply came strangely, a desolate whisper.

"Kill him? Sometimes I think I must. Sometimes I think I must."

The calm acceptance of the words evidently shocked her, gave her pause. She resumed less decidedly, in part-satire.

"I'd kill him. They'd never hang you for it, not in this town."

"They'd send me to prison for life, though." The crushed certainty of the words was absolute.

"Then marry Everallen, you dough of a man! Marry Everallen and you can put the law on Rafe if he waits for her and talks to her like you say."

"Marry Everallen? As if it was like I could! As if she'd marry with a thing like me." The shadow wrenched at its fingers.

"Lord, Lord, listen to the boy! As if any man in the world wasn't good enough for a girl Everallen's age! Now if it was a tall, ripe woman like me, Loosh! . . ." She burst into a cawing laugh.

Hewitt was obviously perturbed.

"Mrs. Vantor—Mrs. Vantor—I didn't—I mean—"

It lent fuel to her creaking mirth. He shrugged his shoulders in a way that seemed foreign, unnatural to him, then went on desperately:

"Besides, Mrs. Vantor, I'm not like her. She's of the woods, she's like the woods. She's like those trees up there—she's strange when you talk to her. And Rafe, he's like that, too, sometimes, and I'm afraid, Mrs. Vantor, I'm afraid. . . ."

Her laugh was shut off like water. He ended on that same blank calmness.

"But I think you're right, Mrs. Vantor. I'll marry her, I'll try to marry her. Marry her and go away, God knows how, after the haying's over. Because, if I don't, I'll kill him or he'll kill me—somehow."

He rose with the tiredness of a man gone old.

"Thanks for the baking powder," he said briefly, and the shadow vanished.

There was more low talking at the back door, but in voices I couldn't catch.

The shadow of Lucius and the quiet words coming from the shadow had impressed me more than any substance could. And his sentence about the likeness between Rafe and Everallen wore a colour of predestined fatality that I trembled at but could not deny. They were atavisms, elementals, both of them—a mere glance showed it clearly. And the play of the driad and the satyr—to behold which is horror for the human—is as old and as reasonless as death. It was by her very elvish remoteness from the world that Everallen might suddenly be betrayed. Yet if only Lucius Hewitt had courage—and once more I went impotently round the useless circle of thought. Till at last the whole cause seemed a vast delusion, and I opened my book again and started reading.

IV

There followed a backwater of some two months, during which, to the surface observer at least, nothing more of any consequence occurred. Then events moved on to their conclusion with the disorderly swiftness of a dream.

Through the two months I considered the case more often than I liked, for, as I say, I was then, as now, examining into the nature of Justice. And there seemed no justice here at all—only the shadow of a man and the spirit of a girl bound fast under a falling sword. And no way of escape was to be seen that did not magnify the tragedy. Doubtless I thought of it strainedly enough—it would not have appeared so hopelessly wrong to the village wiseacres for Everallen to marry Rafe. For it seems that was possible, too, by the gossip Mrs. Venter brought me. But I could only think of the Black Mass.

It was a sultry night of dying July. Mrs. Venter had just fetched my coffee.

"Quite a piece of news that's going around the village!" she said hesitantly.

"Yes? What?"

"Loosh Hewitt and that Everallen cousin of his. They're going to get married."

I felt the most inexpressible relief. For weeks I had carried that unjust tangle of lives in my breast as a man bears a secret and mortal disease. And now everything was to be solved and saved in the simplest manner possible!

"He's got a job down Portland way. They're going there the start of September."

My thoughts of what might have happened seemed remembrances of nightmare. The thick, soft air of the evening was as sweet to me as the first touch of driven spray on the lips of a man convalescent from fever. I smiled in the abundance of my content.

"Thank you. I'm glad to know."

Mrs. Vantor was ready to say more, but I wanted to be alone with my reprieve.

I have seldom been so happy as when, in my chair next morning, I tasted over and over again the knowledge of the previous night. Mrs. Vantor had wheeled me to this window. I could sit and look at the long, complacent slope of that hill for hours on hours and be sure no cloud would fall upon it, I thought. No cloud of human will or passion, that is—there were other clouds enough in the hot heavens. The sultriness had only increased with night—and the sky was huddled with cumuli and oppressive—a foretaste of rain was in the air. And the certain coming of the thunderstorm, already brewing far up in the hills, symbolized to me the final breaking of Fate's grip on the men and woman whose entanglement had fascinated me so long.

I glanced up at the circle of stones, a scytheman approached them, mowing. He straightened a moment to wipe the sweat from his face. The diminished and shadowy gesture seemed indefinitely familiar. Then I knew him. It was Lucius Hewitt. I wondered how Rafe had taken the news.

Then, as I considered him idly, the man himself passed under the window. The puffy face of a powerful beast looked up at me, smiled. A hand waved. I was surprised into a nod. Why Rafe Batchelder should think me worth a "Good morning!"—but, perhaps he, too, had altered, "seen the light," I thought with a vague reminiscence of tracts. What I could not understand at all was the triumph in his face—a triumph so obvious as to be insolent. It came like a chill upon my idling—but the sunlight was too rare to be so wasted, and my mind slipped back to sunny quiet.

Rafe also carried a scythe. He stopped near the bottom of the hill,

spat on his hands, began to mow. The sky grew darker above a fretting wind. The storm would break in half an hour.

After a time it struck me that there was something strange in the way Rafe was mowing. I remembered all the evil I had seen in his face.

Then I saw. Hewitt mowed across the slope of the hill and a little down. Rafe was mowing straight up the slope, the clean path of an arrow. They would meet at the circle of stones.

I glanced around the room desperately. Mrs. Ventor was out; she would not be back for an hour. Both men were good mowers. Within twenty minutes their swathes would cross.

I had always thought it impossible to pray before. For myself I had found it so. But within those twenty minutes I prayed for the cause of Everallen with the strength of unceasing despair. Whether I was heard or not is a thing that you must judge.

Not once did I see the men look at each other as their scythes crept nearer and nearer. There can't have been any sound at all but the soft hiss of the scythes through grass and the sign of the gathering storm.

Rafe was first at the stones by five yards, and waited. Once he looked down the valley toward this house, shading his eyes—to make sure perhaps that my face was there, a smudge of white against the window, the witness for his acquittal should he need one.

The cloud over the sky was complete. Its center, bearing the tempest, hung astonishingly black above the hill. The dust of the path was splattered with a first few heavy drops of rain. Lucius finished mowing, straightened. He walked slowly toward Rafe, his scythe held clumsily in front of him. It is then that Rafe must have spoken.

I can imagine what things he must have said—and that Everallen's name was one of them. For the bonds that Lucius had put on himself for the last six months broke like strings, and he was crying like a madman and charging at Rafe with a wild, loose hacking of his scythe. Rafe shifted flashingly, dodged the rush as easily as a boxer jerks away from a fist. Lucius plunged past, recovered, almost slipped. Then Rafe came at him, half-dancing, with the ugly agility of a crane, the scythe held poised and quivering like a lunging beak of steel. Lucius gave ground continually. He dared not look to save his footing. He was crowded back between two stones.

Rafe shuttled before him, closed in. It seemed like a figure in a country dance—it was all as unreal as that. Then, with the fury of the desperate, Lucius leaped aside as Rafe swooped and struck. The blade

clawed the air and missed, but the staff came full upon Lucius's head. I could hear the *thwack!* in my mind and wondered dully why it didn't reach my ears. Lucius stiffened in his stride for an instant like a man made out of wood. Then he reeled against a stone, hung twitching there, and fell face downward to the ground.

There was no sign from any quarter of the earth, now Cain had killed in self-defense. Rafe looked at the crumple an instant and saw that it did not move. He ran a dozen paces from the stones and stood there waving his arms like an unclean giant of victory.

Thunder slashed across the sky like a ripping cloth, and the rain fell drummingly faster on the yelling lips of his conquest. I saw him sickly and in agony. I saw him skip as he walked, and laugh and shake his long scythe like a metal toy—and then something fierce and thin and incredibly shining reached down out of heaven and struck him.

The rest of it is as simple as flowing water.

They found Lucius there some half an hour after, when he had begun to stir weakly and try to rise. He had no recollection of the struggle, and the char that lighting had made of Rafe they buried as decently as was possible.

Lucius had fever for a month, but Everallen nursed him. They are living down in Portland now—Lucius got a very good job with a shipping concern after his discharge from the army. Two children, a frame house in the suburbs.

It seems strange that people change so much. Lucius is settled, successful—I could tell that the last time I saw them. The village here has never quite forgiven them for daring to go away and be happy—wonders why they so seldom come back. Everallen lost some of her unearthliness with motherhood—but the little girl is an elf from the forest. It gave me a shock when I saw her, the whole tangled play came back so piercingly. They are safe, building safety out of the years, having passed through more torment than most.

And I stay here with my books; and the book that I shall write about Justice. It will be a novel book, that book. For some men think of Justice as Force, causeless Force that drills the chaos of the universe. And to most she is the blind goddess with the balances. But forever now and until I am destroyed, since that hour I sat watching at the window, I have thought of her as thunder—always thunder—summer thunder walking tall between the hills.

THE MODEL BALLAD OF THE COOK AND THE CLAIRVOYANT

by Guy Wetmore Carryl

Miss Margaret MacNamara was a cook from the Emerald Isle
Who landed from Cork in the town of New York with a trunk and
fatuous smile,
And sat for ten days, without daring to raise her eyes, in the stolid,
demure row
Of what people call, for no reason at all, a high-grade intelligence
bureau.
In a neighboring room was an unemployed groom, who had lately
come over from Norway.
And, smitten with ardor, stared harder and harder each minute at her
through the doorway.
Fate has curious turns—(almost every one learns that we cannot expect
to avoid them)—
And it settled the doom of the cook and the groom, for the very same
person employed them!

Now this was a chance for a kitchen romance such as one doesn't
frequently find.
She distanced most cooks in the matter of looks, and the groom, by
the way, wasn't blind.
While she worked on a patty, he used to get chatty, and while he was
cleaning the knives,
She'd appear with bare arms—not the least of her charms—and jolly
him up about wives.
When dinner was finished, and labor diminished, they took their chairs
out in the area,
And she, without stint, would drop hint after hint, while he only grew
all the warier.
Still, as all women do, she supposed he was true, and her heart it most
terribly tore
When she found out one day he was getting too gay with a chamber-
maid living next door.
The heart-broken Bid her discovery hid, and applied herself calmly
and meekly

To searching for hints in her favorite prints, which were left at the lower door weekly:

Till she happened one day in a casual way to find an escape from annoyance,

When she struck half a column of balderdash solemn that dealt with the art of clairvoyance.

So she put on her cloak, left the carrots to soak, set the kettle well back on the stove,

And with hastening feet set off for the street where lived the astrologer cove.

He received her in state, without making a date, and he hitched with his thumb at his collar,

And remarked, "Before we go ahead there's a fee." And he modestly added, "A dollar."

His speech it was suave, and his costume zouave, and his manner than lather was soapier,

And he wore on his head a yellow and red affair like a big cornucopia.

He shuffled a pack of cards with a knack that showed he was no amateur,

Dealt a red and black queen, with a knave in between, and expounded her fortune to her.

Then he sold her a lotion, and also a potion, the first one to make her more beautiful.

And the second to be put in any one's tea whom she wished to make loving and dutiful.

He sent her away feeling happy and gay, though in candor I'm bound to assert he

With an innocent look had buncoed that cook out of something like four dollars, thirty.

The lotion she spread in the way he had said all over her ruddy complexion,

And instead of her dimples some two hundred pimples came out in 'most every direction.

When they sat down to sup, she put in the cup of her lover the wizard's emulsion,

And the agonized groom flopped all over the room in a highly dramatic convulsion.

And early next morning her victim gave warning—it seems he was
horribly vexed.

He thought from her simples—and also her pimples—she might
break out *anywhere* next!

He said to her face that he'd found a new place where risks he'd not
run any more.

And that was on Monday—the following Sunday he married her rival
next door.

THE MORAL is highly distressing, but of it one cannot get rid:

You frequently can get a bid for a man when you can't get a man for a
Bid!

TO A BROADWAY HOTEL

by Christopher Morley

Hotel, hotel, burning bright
In the jewelled Broadway night,
What remorseless hand or eye
Planned that caravanseraï?

What mephistophelian will
Schemed the Benedictine Grill?
Who the lawless decorators
Of those Moorish elevators?

Medley of conflicting styles!
Gothic ceilings, blue Dutch tiles,
Tesselated Turkish floors,
Quattrocento cuspidors!

What most godless architect
Did this frantic job direct?
The only human places are
The cigar-stand, and the bar!

THE BLISSFUL INTERLUDE

by Myron Brinig

I

ALPHEUS PARR looks far better in death than he ever did in life, and his widow is in Reno. Only it isn't necessary that she should be there, now. . .

I've just come away from Parr's home, where, in the living room, resting solemnly on two high-backed chairs, is his coffin. It's just an ordinary coffin, black and awesome and horribly comfortable; but lying in it with his toes turned toward heaven, Alpheus looks extraordinary. With the whitest of sheets wrapped about his cumbersome body, his hair carefully brushed to cover the bald spot and his eyes closed, Alpheus looks almost dignified. Curious, isn't it, that a man whose greatest ambition in life was to attain dignity, should accidentally stumble upon it in death? But Alpheus was ever a stumbler, a buffoon, so one more stumble matters very little. Peace to your bones, Alpheus Parr, and it is my respectful hope that in whatever place you have reopened your eyes, there are souls more sympathetic and kindly than those on this planet which you have now so happily forsworn!

It was at Harvard that I first met Alpheus. I used to observe him waddling shyly from the chapel to the Romance languages. He attained the languages but never got within miles of Romance—although he deluded himself into thinking he had reached that Arcadia after his marriage to Cora. Just a delusion. . .

There was something about Parr that attracted a comfortable pity in my being. He was forever looking into other men's eyes with that hang-down expression of his that seemed to say, "Oh, take me up, do! I'm not at all a bad fellow when you get to know me!" But Alpheus was never taken up; he was doomed from the cradle to be a gentleman-in-waiting—a dank, clumsy gentleman with moist, begging eyes.

In company with my room-mate, Ross Kemp, a leader in all sorts of college activities, I was walking across the campus one day when Alpheus hove, like a storm-tossed brig, into sight. From a distance of five yards, I could feel Parr's eyes upon us, begging some kind of acknowledgment. Passing abreast of us he gurgled something that sounded like "Hello," though it may have been any other word in the English language. It was all very awkward and pathetic—like an

intoxicated man trying to sing a hymn. After he had passed us—I am certain that he did not look back—I turned to my room-mate and asked who the peculiar fellow was.

"Oh, don't you know?" answered Ross, as if the subject weren't of great importance. "That's Alpheus Parr. Funny looking fish, isn't it? They say he's a leetle bit loco upstairs. I don't know. Anyway, he's an unhealthy looking bounder."

Perhaps I did not realize it at the time, but Ross's references to Parr prejudiced me extremely in the awkward fellow's favor. "Leetle bit loco?" My interest was strangely, acutely aroused. "Unhealthy?" I resolved to investigate the funny looking fish.

The opportunity presented itself shortly after.

Parr was going to, or coming from some class and his arms were loaded down with books and papers. Men of his type always have great difficulties with objects they are carrying, particularly when the objects are many and of uneven size. As usual, upon seeing me, Parr began to experience unusual emotions—for I was one of the popular ones of the University—and in his efforts to appear harmless and agreeable dropped several books to the ground. I stooped and returned them to him. For a few moments he wrestled with his burdens, physical and of the spirit; then he managed to gurgel, "Thank you."

"Not at all." I returned. "Going my way? Perhaps I can help you."

His soft cowed looking eyes had grown moist with an exceptional experience.

"Would it be any trouble for you—I mean—" he floundered.

He seemed all at sea. I acted promptly and relieved him of some of his books. Then, fitting my stride to his more ungainly one, I began an extraordinary acquaintance. For some minutes he had no words to express his gratitude. Then he turned towards me, quite overcome, and mumbled:

"I hate to put you to all this bother."

"You're not putting me to any bother," I snapped back at him, for now I was beginning to understand why the others shunned him.

We said not another word until we arrived outside his rooms—a surprisingly dignified looking house for so undignified a chap. By the steps we halted, and I was afraid lest he drop the books again in his confusion. At the time I thought him an awkward ass, but now I know that he was debating with himself whether or not I would consider it an insult if he asked me in. Imagine that! I solved his momentous

problem for him by preceding him up the flight of steps. He must have followed me joyously.

His rooms, I thought, were exceptionally well and tastefully furnished. Evidently, Parr's family had money. I remember seating myself in a comfortable chair without invitation—how superior undergraduates can be!—and calmly lighting a cigarette. Parr, having disposed somehow of his books and papers stood uncertainly in the center of the room looking at the ceiling. From top to bottom he was sloppy with the sloppiness of the soft and abnormally self-conscious. His features were sloppy, his hands were huge and damp looking, and his clothes had a dissipated, stale look.

"Nice place you have here," I began in a self-satisfied way.

"Ya, yep. It's not so much," acknowledged Parr still gazing at the ceiling.

I picked up a book lying on the table. Moore's "Memoires of My Dead Life."

"Moore," I remarked, not without a trace of surprise. "Smooth style that fellow has."

"Oh, so you've re—," began Parr. "Hasn't he? Lovely . . . Style . . . lovely . . . Have you seen my Keats?"

"No," I invited. "Where?"

It took Parr an unaccountably long time to bring his body into accord with his promises, but presently he was showing me a fine set of the poet's work. And he was talking intelligently about the poems! "Loco?" Certainly not. "Funny fish," maybe. But certainly not "loco." Only a buffoon. . .

It is extraordinary how articulate shy people can be at times. Inside the hour I was possessed of practically all his history. And I was beginning to piece Alpheus together. His father was a publisher of some note among the excessively high-browed, but his mother was dead. He hadn't cared about coming to Harvard particularly. He had felt that he would be out of place in the slender hipped, athletic atmosphere of college . . . but to please his father . . .

"I'm so funny," said Alpheus getting his foot caught in the rug. "I wish I was different. No one seems to like me . . ."

I got up to go. His cumbersome, moist manners were beginning to wear on me. If he would only have exercised that seal-like body of his! If he would only have put on running trunks and set those flabby legs of his in motion!

"You'll come again?" he begged of me at the door.

"Yes, thanks," I accepted a trifle wearily and looked away from his worshipful eyes. . . . Outside the air was so crisp, and there was a haunting smell of woodsmoke.

II

I continued to see Parr on and off for the rest of my college career. After I left Harvard, I lost touch with him for two years, and when I thought of him at all it was rather like a soiled page in a neglected book. It was at a Fifth Avenue art gallery that we met again. It was there that Alpheus met Cora Lear for the first time. Cora is a sort of relative of mine—a third or fourth cousin I believe. Why on earth she happened to be viewing an exhibition of art, I can't for the life of me remember. At any rate, there she was at my elbow, pretending an interest in nudes in and out of the bath.

In order that there may be no misunderstanding, I must say at once, that Cora herself, in the nude, must be a stunning creature. She's the blazing sort of woman and it's easy to catch fire from her. A noted French artist has called her the most beautiful woman in America—mind you, not the world, and hence his statement carries some weight. Certainly, she whipped Parr's craving spirit cruelly. Optically, therefore, Cora was very much at home in Fifth Avenue art galleries. Spiritually, she should have been at her kennels.

One of the numerous newly sprung psychoanalysts once told Cora that she would never love any man as much as she loved her dogs. She had a dozen of them, I believe, ranging from one of those absurd toy poodles to a gigantic St. Bernard. She never walked out but there was a dog by her side, and she never fell asleep properly without that St. Bernard somewhere in the vicinity. I believe she would have slept with the dog but for the fact that he took up so much room. I believe she included Giant in her prayers—Giant was the St. Bernard's name. He's dead now, and there's a great shaggy granite tombstone to mark the place where he lies. Alpheus will hardly have one as impressive.

But to get back to the art gallery. Cora and I stopped to look at one of the whitest of the nudes emerging from a nondescript bath-tub. What a figure! One of those cool, white nudes that seem a thousand worlds away from the way of all flesh. There was a spiritual beauty about the figure in the painting, a cruelty of far-away beauty. She had moved Alpheus Parr to tears. I heard someone sniffing at my elbow,

and looking about vexatiously, I beheld a familiar profile, a profile that seemed to have oozed down from its proper proportions.

"Alpheus Parr," I mumbled.

He did not hear me—how could he so far away from me?

"Stop that idiot, will you?" Cora commanded me.

Naturally, she could not abide anyone, particularly a foolish looking man, moved to tears by a piece of canvas with paint on it. For a moment, I feared that Cora would treat Alpheus roughly, so I touched him on the shoulder. He looked at me uncomprehendingly.

"Well, well, Parr, fancy meeting you here!" I said warmly.

Then he remembered.

"You!" he gasped.

I reached for his hand and shook it. In my grasp it felt like a mess of warm dough. Hands ought to be educated.

I turned to Cora—Oh, she shouldn't have been there—and introduced her. She took to him at once and shook his hand in the same way she shakes a paw. "Parr? Parr? Where have I seen your name?"

Of course this was a little bit too much for Alpheus. A beautiful nude and then the most beautiful woman a French artist has seen in America! The wonder of it all was that he didn't go mad on the spot. "Where? Where?" she petted him. Oh, these dog women!

Words came to Alpheus at last.

"On a book, maybe," he managed to say.

"A book?" asked Cora. "Then you are an author?"

Alpheus looked pleased to the verge of pain.

"I'm a publisher," he acquainted her.

Cora should have quit there; she should have left him to his nude on canvas. These shy men become a trifle mad when they meet up with substantial ideals.

"Now I remember," said Cora. "I believe you are the publisher of that remarkable book, 'A Dog's World.' I'm sure you are."

When Alpheus admitted to this, Cora seemed to forget my existence. It was—well, preposterous. Never one had encouraged Alpheus to such a degree in such a short space of time. As for Alpheus, he must have been inwardly hysterical with the wonder of it all. Cora invited him to tea on the spot, and I had to help him into the car. Unaided, he would hardly have been able to manage it all. Cora evidently understood the man. How, under the sun, I had not the faintest idea. Now, I know.

His life was like a day that begins with a thickly depressing drizzle; in the late afternoon the sky opens his great blue eyes with a look of sublime bewilderment; and then the sun steps out from behind a cloud with a golden unexpectedness. Cora was as dazzling as she was unexpected. He lay back against the cushions of the limousine hardly daring to look at her for fear that a cloud would suddenly cover her and she would disappear again into the long dreary morning.

We came, at last, to her home, a large, rambling growth in the suburbs, and she led us out into the garden, rather crowded with lilac bushes and dogs. The dogs welcomed her vociferously and they sniffed at Alpheus kindly as if they had known him all their lives. He made several awkward attempts to pat them, and they jumped up and licked his face and hands. He had a way with them.

Presently, the favorite of the kennels, Giant, was led out to us. He was no longer young and nimble. He came slowly and reluctantly, and his eyes ran—for joy of seeing his mistress, presumably. Cora introduced him to Alpheus very gravely; Giant held out a nonchalant paw and Alpheus shook it with something approaching enthusiasm.

"Nice doggie," he murmured vacuously. "Nice doggie."

"He's twelve years old," Cora informed us. "He keeps his figure remarkably. But I'm having trouble with his food. He hasn't the appetite that he had."

Alpheus murmured something unintelligible in response. What did it matter whether or not Giant had an appetite! Lucky dog to be so frequently in the presence of his mistress. Alpheus sipped his tea as if he were in the Garden of Eden rather than a garden of dogs. He probably saw himself alone with Cora in a far-away land. She was the center. There were no dogs—at least they weren't conspicuous; only himself and herself—with probably the whitest nude, the finest set of Keats and a Chopin Nocturne thrown in for good measure.

"I'm so attached to Giant. If he should die, I believe I'd go crazy," Cora was saying.

"But he will die some day," I informed my third or fourth cousin. I thought her slightly ridiculous.

Cora at once became amazingly unstrung. She upset her cup of tea on Parr's frock coat.

"I'm so sorry! Awfully clumsy of me!" she apologized.

"Oh . . . It's nothing," said Alpheus looking at her with his life in his eyes. He seemed greatly honored that the tea she had been

drinking was on his frock coat. Something to take away with him.

"I'm so attached to Giant, you see," she explained. "I can't bear the thought of his being dead. The dog is part of my life."

"I understand," said Parr with a ridiculous reverence. Of course he did no such thing. The man was simply stretching himself in the sunlight—warm, gorgeous sunlight. I doubt if he realized he was living the experience. He must have felt that the next moment someone would wake him, and he would look out, and it would be cloudy and blue and tragic.

I finally led him away. Before taking his leave, he promised to come again in a few days when the three of them, Cora, Giant and himself, would go out for a stroll together. On the way back to town, he spoke only once. I told him that I thought the winter we had just been through had been unusually mild. He said, "Beautiful," and closed his eyes. I was glad to leave him at his apartment. He waddled away without even saying good-night.

I beheld the unusual spectacle of Alpheus Parr in love.

III

"She treats me abominably," Ross Kemp complained to me several days later at the club. "Perhaps she doesn't love me, but she might respect me as much as she does her dogs."

"Are you really in love with Cora?" I asked my old room-mate. "If you are, I feel dreadfully sorry for you."

"I am in love with her," Ross emphasized. "And please keep your pity to yourself!"

I retreated behind my newspaper.

"She is amazing!" re-commenced. "This afternoon we had arranged to go to a *matinée* together. I bought the tickets—had a hard time getting them; the play's a success—and went out to get her. Well, I might have known! She wasn't in. The housekeeper told me that she was out strolling with that damn dog, and a man. After I had got the tickets, too. Don't you think—"

"A man?" I inquired from behind my newspaper.

"Yes. Mr. Parr or Carr or something."

"Ah," I said putting aside my newspaper. "You mean Alpheus Parr."

"There, that's it," affirmed Kemp. "Who is he, anyway? Where did she meet him?"

"Why Ross, you must remember Parr? That fellow at Harvard who was so out of things? Parr, the publisher?"

"That—boor!" Ross flung a half-smoked cigarette at the ash-tray and missed. "Why should she go out walking with him? Why, I can't imagine. . . . He's not bearable. But then, what do you expect of a woman who worships dogs?"

"That's just it, Ross," I told him. "Don't expect anything of Cora. She's the strangest girl in the world. Born that way. You just fall out of love with her, Ross, as quickly as you can. Go and take that engineering job in Central America, or wherever it is, and forget about her." And then I resumed my newspaper.

"You don't understand," observed Ross. Straight and handsome and clean as a man could be! Dear old Ross! That Bridge of his that spans the Amazon. . . . And not only that. A man who used to win debating matches and football games at Harvard. A man with a future; the best friend in the world. And here, she had gone out strolling with a twelve-year-old St. Bernard and a clown with baggy trousers! Well, well. . . .

"Perhaps I had better go down to Central America." Ross was bending over my chair and his voice sounded as if he wanted me to argue him out of it.

Instead, I said, "By all means, Ross! And by the time you've come back, she'll be ready to jump at you!"

IV

Three months later, Cora and Alpheus were married. The outcome of that strange courtship shocked me, but Alpheus must have been the most shocked of all. In a few miraculous months to be lifted out of the slough of morbid ineptitude to the heights of glorious romance is enough to make any man wake sensitively to the downright goodness of human existence. But life if not one, it is a series of awakenings, and tomorrow we may open our eyes to tragedy.

Those same qualities in Alpheus Parr that others found repugnant drew Cora irresistibly. Those gaping uncertainties of manner, the gawky shyness, the weakness of his features, the sloppiness of dress, in short, the whole impossibility of his excuse for counting himself acceptable in most eyes, made Cora fall in love with him. After that first stroll together Alpheus became her slave; never a man lived who worshipped a woman so absolutely. He lost no opportunity to make himself useful to her; there was something irrevocable about the way

he answered her moods. And he wanted nothing in return but just the small favor of looking at her—looking, and treasuring every aspect of her beauty. What must have been his divine bewilderment when she suggested marriage! His gratitude must have wrung his very soul.

Not that she hadn't encouraged him. She used to take him out into the garden and feed him tea and cakes while she fed the dogs bones and chocolates. And when she was absent in town, it was Alpheus who watched jealously over the dogs until her return. To his especial care she gave Giant. The two, dog and man, became inseparable—although I am sure Alpheus would not have felt the least spark of interest in the dog had the mistress been other than she was. I often beheld the ludicrous spectacle of Giant and Alpheus walking along the road, putting up with each other because their mistress so willed it!

"Really," I remember saying to Cora one day after having met the two on the road, "I can't for the life of me understand what you see in the man. And Ross eating out his heart in Central America!"

Cora got quite angry with me that day, and her anger is the snappish kind. "You are insulting Alph—Mr. Parr. I won't have it. Do you hear?"

I had never seen her in precisely that mood before, and I was amazed at the instantly summoned venom. Cora has always been a study to me; now I was bewildered by a new facet she showed me. She was an infinitude of perversities—men fell in love with her and she fell in love with dogs.

Alpheus reappeared at that moment, and Cora became her usual self again.

"Did you have a nice walk, you two? I'm so glad you like each other! Come, let's go out into the garden, and I'll have something hot for the both of you."

Giant wagged his tail in an emotional manner and Alpheus grinned down at his shoes. Parr was certainly coming along in Cora's estimation, for she included very few mortals in the same breath with Giant. I saw them enter the garden, the woman moving briskly in front, the man and animal following with muffled exclamations of appreciation. I felt an almost uncontrollable desire to laugh until I was blue in the face. Instead, I scowled and left them abruptly.

Then one morning, Giant turned in his tail and died. It was awfully unusual and inconvenient. Cora achieved the epochal and cried. The dog lay stretched out, immensely still, amazingly cold, in Cora's

bedroom. When he refused to stir, Cora called shrilly for her servants, and they came, but nothing could be done about it. Dead dogs are as dead as dead people. In a way, their lack of life is even more emphatic than the lack in humans, because one expects death from the higher animals, whereas in the lesser there is something radically different about it.

"He's dead! He's dead! What shall I do?" Cora demanded of her servants.

After a few minutes, the gardener suggested that she might bury him.

"What!" cried Cora. But the gardener was correct as things turned out. He had to be buried sooner or later, and the sooner the better. Cora began to realize this after an hour or so. She summoned Alpheus to the telephone and ordered him to be at the funeral the next day. No one else came to Cora's mind. No one else could. The dog had become inextricably linked up with the man.

Cora had the gardener procure a casket with silver handles, and inside Giant was laid with his sapphire studded collar and his various wraps. The journey to the cemetery was solemn. The casket was placed on the floor of the limousine, and the two mourners sat in silence. Halfway out, Cora asked Alpheus to take her hand, and he obeyed. She looked up into his eyes sadly.

Upon that instant he ceased to think of the dead dog. But then, the dog had always been a background for him. It was always Cora in his eyes. Cora was the beginning and the end. Whatever she chose to do was as right as the sun and the rain and the stars.

On the way back from the cemetery Alpheus accompanied her to the monument works where she arranged for the shaggy granite stone that now marks the place of Giant's ashes. Then the two motored back to the house in the suburbs and secluded themselves. The house must have seemed curiously empty to her at first. But as the days passed the ache of Giant lessened. In his death was the triumph of Alpheus Parr. When the dog had lived he was secondary. Now that there was no Giant, he became the favorite slave of the household—to Cora he made up for that which had been taken from her. More and more of his time was taken up with that extraordinary woman. . . . And they were married.

V

Ross Kemp had departed for Central America a man of uncertain capabilities and wavering will. He returned, true steel. From an indefi-

nite, undecided boy, he had developed into a genuinely strong power, a man of determination. Months of battling alone and overcoming the most stubborn difficulties had turned the trick. When he grasped my hand in the club, I felt the contact of a grim sureness gripping me. Of course I had always vaguely realized that Ross had the makings, but the surprise of his matured assurance was none the less disturbing. I felt securely carried away.

"Man of deeds, how are you? You've the zip and flash of a brand new locomotive!"

"Thanks," he answered. "Well, I've come back to marry Cora. Is she ready to jump at me?"

"You've come—really?"

"Good God, how I've longed for her!" he grumbled.

This was really very good! "Cora is already married." I told him. "Hadh't you heard?"

He let go of my hand very suddenly, and I felt like a swimmer must, who abruptly realizes a discouraging case of cramp. "Married? No. No, I hadn't heard that. Whom did she marry?"

"Alpheus Parr." The name caused me a certain degree of nausea. If I could only have laughed!

"Who is Alpheus Parr?"

Curious how Ross kept forgetting that man! "You remember Ross, surely? The publisher? That peculiar chap. . . ."

"Oh . . . Well. . . ."

"Well, Cora married him, Ross."

"What for!"

VI

It was funny to see Cora leading that husband of hers about town—that peculiar personality who had succeeded into the place left vacant by a St. Bernard. She showed him everywhere, not the least abashed, and though everyone grinned behind their backs, she continued to lead. It wouldn't have made the least difference to Cora if they had grinned directly at her. And Alpheus wore that expression of plaintive adoration in his eyes. It was obvious that he, himself, did not understand "what for." It was enough for him to realize the *actuality* of it. Someone had pushed him to the peak. He was there, sniffing the air of the heights, a trifle dazed, perhaps, but what of that?

Extraordinary personalities, Cora and Alpheus—there is hardly

any explaining them. It's like trying to explain a beaver mothering a blind puppy—a rare occurrence, but not without the bounds of probability since it has been known to happen. Now it is only necessary to lift the gate and enter in the ruthless, stabilizing force, Ross Kemp, and you have the divine comedy, complete.

I do not know exactly where Ross met Cora again, but wherever it was, the rekindled sparks of passion must have flown merrily. There can be no doubt in my mind now, that Ross returned from Central America at the propitious moment. Cora was beginning to tire of Alpheus. There had been moments when that husband of hers must have demanded something of herself—and Giant had never demanded anything of that especial kind. How Alpheus could have so far forgotten himself, is a mystery. But perhaps there was something in him that had gotten the upper hand, for the time being, something of the animal in every man that demands its purple nights. Alpheus had been caught napping on the heights, and his wife had shaken him rather roughly. Cora allowed her household pets unusual freedom, but when it came to licking off the table plates—

The novelty of Alpheus was beginning to wear off, but he, of course, did not understand the change. His eyes begged forgiveness from her every moment of the day, but Cora had become wary. He tried to make it up to her with jewels and flowers, and succeeded in irritating her the more. He ought to have known his place.

It was at a dinner dance given by Ross's mother to celebrate his return from Central America that the definite break between them came. Alpheus was the duck out of water at these affairs, and this particular event was no exception. The party found him at his incomparable worst. He seemed deplorably at variance with his evening clothes, his hands and his feet. These things had not irritated Cora before, but tonight, the conquering hero, Ross, happened to be sitting at her elbow. And Ross was in his particular glory. Beside him, Alpheus appeared a preposterous imitation, a caricature. Cora was obviously ill at ease with her husband, and gave herself up to Ross's conversation. I noticed that Alpheus looked relieved to find that his wife was having an interesting evening—boredom had been becoming frequent with her. Public gatherings always filled him with terror, and at them, he spent most of his time pretending an interest in the furniture.

Alpheus never danced, and for a long time Cora had abstained because she had lost interest. But at Mrs. Kemp's affair she re-entered into the exercise with Ross as partner. I observed them moving gracefully across the floor, and it seemed quite natural for them to be so close together. It must have been then that Cora succumbed to the greater realities. Probably the strength of Kemp's arms awakened Cora's somnolent desires after so many years. In such a splendid creature as Cora, sex is bound to come out sooner or later, and unfortunately for Alpheus, it came later.

Toward the close of the evening, they disappeared from the floor, and did not re-appear again until "Home, Sweet Home." Alpheus, meanwhile, had been making some half-hearted attempts to find his wife, and had looked everywhere but in the green-house. If he had entered there, he would have been considerably shocked. As it happened, I had been the one to come upon Cora and Ross kissing away all of the obstacles in the world. Well, Cora had fallen in love three years too late. Out in the hall I collided with Alpheus, and it came over me all of a heap that he was Cora's husband. It took me a few minutes to pull myself together again.

"Did you find her?" Alpheus asked sleepily.

"No—yes, she'll be here directly." I hoped to God they would.

Presently, Cora and Ross made their belated appearance, and we were all bundled into that historic limousine of hers. She looked younger than she had in months and Ross seemed strangely at ease. I remembered his, "I've come back to marry her" and stole a glance at Alpheus. He sat alone in one corner, raising his eyes now and again to the splendid vision of his wife. She had never looked more beautiful.

When we reached the house in the suburbs, Alpheus got out of the car first and stood beside the door offering his hand to Cora. She made as if to descend, then seeing Alpheus for the first time in several hours, drew back involuntarily and motioned Ross with her eyes to get out first. And it was he who assisted her out and let his firm brown hand linger with a tender authority upon her arm. I saw Alpheus following them obsequiously up the steps, across the threshold. . . .

VII

From what Cora has since written me—her letters are distressingly frank—and from what I know of Parr's character, I have been able to reconstruct, bit by bit, that last dreadful evening. For five months

Cora had been flaunting her new discovery of love in everybody's face. Only Alpheus misunderstood. The woman had mesmerized him when she married him, so it is easy to understand his blindness. He was frankly glad that Ross had returned to "entertain my wife—I'm afraid I'm such a bore." It is small wonder then that his awakening should be so piercingly tragic.

After dinner, Cora came down, dressed for traveling, and informed her husband very coolly that she was leaving him forever. They were in the dining-room, and Alpheus dropped a log into the fireplace with such vehemence that the sparks flew up and bit his cheeks.

"What did you say, dear?" he asked, still looking into the fire. There is something about a fire that robs the very moment of its cruel contours.

"I'm going to Reno tonight, Alpheus. I've bought my ticket. I'm not coming back. I'm going to marry Ross Kemp."

Alpheus turned about slowly so that he faced his wife. He dreaded to look into her eyes, but when he did he knew it was all over, ended—this unutterably blissful interlude.

"Cora . . ."

"I never loved you, Alpheus. You must know why I married you."

He opened his mouth but said nothing. There was a collision of far-off planets sounding in his ears.

"I love Ross, Alpheus," she said with terrific candour. "If he wanted to kill me, I'd let him."

"You—you don't love me, Cora!"

"No, Look out! The flames will burn your coat."

The pitiful expression in his eyes! "Then why did you marry me, Cora?"

"You ask and ask! Can't you keep quiet? You're such a noisy old fellow. Your eyes—they're just like Giant's. After he died, I had to have someone around me to remind me of the dog." She went up to him and began patting him on the head. "You have the kindest eyes in the world. Alpheus—so sweet and pleading—like dear old Giant's. Now run off to bed, dear fellow, and be thankful you're rid of me."

Then the maid brought down her bag, and she left the house. Alpheus was alone. Far off, a dog howled, howled, howled. . .

"Cora?" he screamed. "Cora! Cora!"

The maid reappeared in the door with a very frightened face. "She's gone, and she said for you to go to bed, sir. Will you, sir?"

He said nothing. He merely stood in the center of the room, swaying slightly. The maid disappeared.

He merely stood. It must have been an hour later that he went to the library table and removed something from one of the drawers. Then, without hat or overcoat, he went out of the house. He walked and walked. There was a bench. He sat down mechanically. It was a bright evening. The moon shone.

A mongrel cur came up to him and sniffed his heels. The moon shone into the dog's eyes—sweet and pleading. Alpheus remembered swiftly as a falling comet. The cur looked up at him as if begging a caress.

"Oh!" sobbed Alpheus. He removed the gun quickly and fired into the dog's eyes. Then he pressed the muzzle to his temple. There must have been an instant of remembering the most amazing happiness . . . Keats and Chopin and her . . . then nothing at all.

* * *

With the whitest of sheets wrapped about his cumbersome body, his hair carefully brushed to cover the bald spot and his eyes closed, Alpheus looks almost dignified. Curious, isn't it, that a man whose greatest ambition in life was to attain dignity should accidentally stumble upon it in death?

THE MAXIMS OF METHUSELAH

Regarding the Women of the Land of Nod

by Gelett Burgess

1 *The proper understanding of women availeth men mightily.* 4 *Divers precepts concerning her ways.* 7 *And woman's wile in roping in men.* 16 *Of her immemorial bromides.* 17 *A waiter's ways compared to those of a woman.* 20 *How to rule over women.* 24 *Insult and flattery both excellently practised by women.* 27 *The patriarch, in an example of his own experience, sheweth how difficult it is to recognize types.* 44 *The two views of woman.*

MY son, consider the ways of women and be wise; for he who knoweth them not is as one who walketh blindfold over flypaper: he shall become sore *entangled*.

2 From women mayest thou learn of women, even from her who fooleth thee shalt thou know how others would fool thee.

3 For men are comrades one with another, they give not away the game, but every woman's hand is against her sister, and her ways are made plain.

4 ¶ To a woman, the man she loveth is even as an infant, behold, she humoreth him like a child. For he is vain, full of importance and noise, even as the babe within her arms.

5 The fool sayeth unto her Why gettest thou not a hat *like Miss Smith's*? But he who avoideth trouble speaketh warily of her raiment.

6 Wouldst thou discover the primitive female in all women? Go to the woman with nerves, and she shall teach thee psychology. Yea, when she weepeth, when she gnasheth her teeth, when hysterics come upon her, then shall she show thee what lies hidden *in all women*.

7 ¶ Now, on a time, a woman smiled upon me, saying Dost thou love me?

8 And I said unto her. *Nay*, I love thee not.

9 Yet again she came unto me, saying Dost thou *not* love me?

10 And I said *Nay*, have I not told thee? I love thee not.

11 And the third time the woman came fawning, and she wept, saying If thou wilt only *pretend* that thou lovest me, then will my heart be assuaged.

12 And my heart softened and my will became as water, and I said unto her Lo, if it pleaseth thee that I should deceive thee, then will I surely say. Behold, I love thee *But I mean it not*.

13 And when I had said it she fastened her eyes upon me, and I could not depart from her, seventy and seven were the years of my captivity, wherein every day she said

14 Lo, hast thou not said unto me I love thee? Wherefore seekest thou to depart? Thou art bound unto me.

15 And I gnashed my teeth and rent my hair, desiring to slay her, for great was her guile

16 ¶ Of the women who have said unto me *Lo, I will tell thee what I have dared tell no other man*, have I counted upward of six hundred, and of them who said *Thou understandest me as hath no man*, behold, the wilderness would not hold them.

17 ¶ My son, observe the waiter at the restaurant, how he studieth his victims, searching out their weaknesses, that his tips may be large Lo, I say unto thee, so doth a woman study her prey that she may accomplish her will

18 Whether he liketh blue she noticeth, and if he admireth green it doth not escape her; the books that he readeth doth she read also, and if peradventure he hateth onions, *she is aware of it.*

19 She observeth his ways, saying: *Ha, ha*, when the time cometh then shall I work him.

20 ¶ My son, if a woman love thee give her many commandments. Say unto her: *Thou shalt drink no coffee*, and she shall keep thy word. Command her as a slave, and she shall love thee.

21 Yet shalt thou command her *only* regarding those things she would fain in anywise do; prevent her not when her mind is set.

22 For in small things woman would obey a master, yea, she rejoiceth in her slavery; but he who forceth a woman against her will, he shall encounter a live wire; his love will be shocked.

23 Many a maiden have I known who could catch mice in her fingers, but of them who could *not* trim hats better than her milliner, nay, not one.

24 ¶ Who is so rude as an insolent woman, and what man dare utter her insults? Her tongue is barbed and is baited with friendliness; she knoweth not shame. For behold, she hath but one weapon, but a man hath two fists.

25 Yet when she flattereth thee, she surpasseth all boldness; she buttereth thee as with butter, yea, she layeth it on thick. And man lappeth it up, he eateth of her praise greedily, *he calleth for more.*

26 What man can compete with woman when she serveth out the honey; and when she handeth out the vinegar who can equal her?

27 ¶ Now in the Land of Nod there was a youth, and he was named Gazabe, *which, being interpreted, signifieth He Who Putteth in his Foot;*

28 And by the side of the Tigris he came upon a woman reading a tablet.

29 Her eyes were bluer than the ice of the Antarctic, and the height of her brow was great, for she was a college graduate. Six degrees had she taken, and all her ways were chaste.

30 And the youth wooed her, saying: Lo, how I *respect* thee; thy *wisdom* maketh me to be afraid. Thou art purer than the lilies, therefore let not my touch sully thee. Let us reason together.

31 And she said unto him: Go thy way, *thou simple one,*

32 For I desire not to be respected, neither do I regard platonic friendship. My learning is a curse unto me, and as for my degrees *they are not worth a hairpin.*

33 Where is he who dareth to seize me by the hair of my head, dragging me into his cave; and why cometh not he who shall beat me *until I become enamored?*

34 For a romantic lover have I not yet seen; and as for him who wooeth with a vengeance, he is a minus quantity to me.

35 And Gazabe marveled mightily, saying: What aileth me, that I have played the yap with this damsel? And he held up his right hand, swearing: *Never again.*

36 And he awoke as from a dream, and went down into Babylonia. And after he had journeyed ten days he came upon a damsel gazing into a mirror. And she was an actorine; *her name was Maybelle.*

37 Her hair was stained with henna, and upon her fingers were many rings. Of rouge and divers unguents had she used ten measures.

38 And Gazabe said unto Maybelle: Lo, thou art a pomegranate, thy form is exceeding fine: thy perfect garment fitteth thee, and thy feet are smaller than mice. There are none like unto thee.

39 And he put his arms about her and gathered her in; yea, before she was aware, he kissed her upon the lips mightily, so that men heard the noise thereof.

40 And she smote him upon the face.

41 Saying: Lo, because I am an actorine shalt thou not respect me? And if I wear tights upon the stage, is there no virtue in me?

42 Where is he who shall be *a brother* unto me, and who is the man who shall be my *friend*? For my heart sickeneth for knowledge, and I would fain discourse of the Fourth Dimension.

43 And Gazabe departed from that land, and shaved his head; even unto the Hoboites did he make his way. Upon his head he cast ashes, and of sackcloth were his trousers.

44 ¶ Now of men who seek to understand women there are but two schools: those who regard them as angels, *and are deceived*, and those who consider them as devils and are *amused*.

DONKEYS*

by Leonid Andreyev

I

THE famous Enrico Spaghetti was justly regarded as the favorite of the gods and of the people. Strong and handsome, he possessed a fascinating voice, an incomparable bel canto, and at his very first appearance on the stage he overshadowed all other famous singers and was nicknamed Orpheus. When he was thirty years old his fame had spread throughout the Old and New Worlds, from sunny Rio Janeiro to the cold hyperborean lands.

His parents were simple folk who lived a life of poverty, but Enrico amassed enormous wealth through his heavenly talent and became the friend of many persons of high station: of English peers, of German counts and even of the then wealthy Prince of Monaco. And many philosophers, free from cheap enticements, became intimate with the great singer, striving to fathom the secret of his extraordinary gifts, while painters and sculptors vied with one another in picturing and immortalizing his fine head and face, whose features bore the unmistakable stamp of distinction. It is superfluous to mention that society women were most generous to him, their magnanimity often bordering on unbridled passion, but being a sensible man and loving his art above all else, Enrico disregarded their reckless advances and succeeded in maintaining all the charms and comforts of single-blessedness.

At the time when Enrico Spaghetti was making his reputation the gramophone had not yet been invented, and we have no means of judging the quality and power of his voice, but in the memoirs of his contemporaries and in the magazines of that time we find numerous statements to the effect that his voice was fascinating beyond belief, and it seemed as though it belonged to an omnipotent wizard. According to these accounts, the thousands of people who listened to Enrico lost complete control over themselves, and, at the wizard's will, were obediently transported from bitter tears to uncontrollable laughter, from despair to dazzling delight and almost wild ecstasy. With the very first sound of his voice, rising to the sky on the wings of inspiration, he subdued the most indomitable souls and led the people as if they were

* Authorized translation by Herman Bernstein.

blind, or as a magnet attracts from dust. True, many proud people tried to resist his mysterious charms, but there is no record of any instance, when such resistance was crowned with success, usually the unfortunate persons showing such resistance turned into the warmest admirers of Sparghetti.

Thus, it is said, a certain statesman, powerful in his domain, who created kingdoms and powerful legions, but who was entirely indifferent to music and to beauty, for a long time declined to hear Sparghetti, declaring that he would fall asleep in his chair at the first sound of his voice, as he used to fall asleep to the tune of his nurse's lullaby.

"With a barrel of wine and to the accompaniment of a drum, I would perhaps be prepared to hear him sing, and I would perhaps even sing a little myself, as I used to during the student feasts, but these trills and the piano—excuse me, I am too busy!" he said angrily to those who tried to induce him to go to the concert of the visiting singer.

But what happened? Invited to the box by a royal personage whose invitation he dared not decline—for the invitation was equivalent to an order—the great statesman did not fall asleep, on the contrary, he fell into a state akin to ecstasy, almost madness. Flushed with delight, he thus expressed himself at the end of the concert in a conversation with the royal personage:

"Your Highness! If I were given such a voice, I would without shedding a single drop of blood conquer France, Austria and Great Britain and place them at your feet. To some I would sing: 'March along behind me!' To others I would sing: 'You are conquered by me! Attention!' and all would be ended, with your majesty's permission. I must admit that this is stronger than the bayonet, even stronger than the cannon!"

And Enrico, rewarded by a high mark of honor, went on, sowing everywhere his fascinating gifts, and seeing no bounds to his wizardly powers. For that of which the statesman only dreamed had already become partly true; and the great singer had the occasion to experience his power over a coarse mob. That happened in London, in one of the dark and dangerous quarters, where Enrico went alone, unaccompanied, for a rendezvous. Suddenly surrounded by a group of robbers who threatened to take his life, he forced them by his singing to abandon their criminal intentions, and continuing to sing, conducted them as obedient children are led by a careful nurse, to the very gates of the police station, where he turned them over to the authorities, mute with admiration and surprise.

It was quite natural that under such circumstances Enrico Spaghetti became imbued with a deep faith in his supernatural powers, and at times, beholding himself in the mirror, he seriously imagined that he was of divine origin.

II

Like all other singers who have no leisure for literary studies, Enrico did not know for a long time who was Orpheus, by whose name his admirers and the magazines frequently called him. One day he addressed the following question to his secretary and friend, Honoria de Vietri:

"Tell me, who was Orpheus whose name I hear so often in praise? I am tired of it. When did he live? And is it possible that that tenor was so much superior to me that I should be adorned with his name? I have strong doubts about it."

The esteemed and highly intelligent Honoria in answer told the singer the myth about Orpheus who fascinated by his song the forest, the rocks and the wild beasts of the desert.

"The trees," said Honoria, "attracted by the power of the splendid sounds, gathered around the singer and gave him shade and coolness; the bewitched rocks surrounded him; the birds of the forest left the thicket, and the beasts came out of their caves and listened quietly and humbly to the sweet songs of Orpheus. . . ."

"So it is a fairy tale!" said the proud singer with a sigh of relief. "Well, and how did Orpheus end his life?"

"Very badly, Enrico," answered Honoria; "he was indifferent to the women whom he attracted by his songs, and for that he was torn to pieces. Beware, Enrico!"

The singer laughed:

"Yes, in this respect we resemble each other. I also will be torn to pieces some day. Tell me, my friend, could this Orpheus have charmed the Count who gave me a medal?"

"I suppose he could."

"And could he have conducted the robbers to the police station by his singing?"

"I think he could have done that, too. But that is only a fairy tale, while you are alive, and there is no reason for you to envy him, incomparable one."

Enrico became thoughtful and said slowly:

"Yes, I am alive. But if you want, I will go out tomorrow morning on the square and start a revolution in Italy!"

"I have no doubt you could do it," answered the cautious and considerate Honoria de Vietri, "but I don't know what you would do with the rebels afterwards. In order to rule them, you would have to sing unceasingly, day and night, and your health would hardly permit that!"

Both laughed at the joke, and thus their convention ended. But the egoistic and proud Enrico could not reconcile himself to the thought that even the mythical Orpheus was above him in the opinion of people, and whenever he heard his name mentioned again in praise, he felt as if someone had wounded his very heart. If he could only hear Orpheus sing once and compare his voice and his manner of singing! It is very possible that such a comparison would have shown that the fame of Orpheus was overestimated and would have dispelled the prejudice from which he, Enrico, must now suffer so unfairly. But what of the rocks that gathered about the singer? Of course that was nonsense of which it was useless to talk, but what of the birds and the beasts? True, at present the birds are frightened by human beings and are not so trustful as were the birds in those days; and such beasts could be found only in menageries nowadays—but nevertheless—

Occupied with his affairs, Honoria had forgotten entirely about this conversation, when the singer suddenly asked him, in order to be guided by his knowledge and his counsel:

"Listen. Was that Orpheus able to charm and attract domestic animals by his singing? For instance, cows, dogs and hens?"

Honoria thought a while and answered cautiously:

"I don't know whether there existed at that time such domestic animals as you enumerated, but if they existed, then Orpheus, of course, charmed them also with his song. But that is only a fairy tale, Enrico, and you are devoting too much thought to it."

"It is immaterial to me whether it is a fairy tale or not!" answered the singer angrily. "But I am sick and tired of it. I don't want to hear any more of this Orpheus, about whom they tell so many lies."

The frightened secretary hastened to agree with him, but this calmed the agitated and offended singer only outwardly. And the greater his triumphs, the more flowers, money, love and adoration Fate showered upon him, the more hateful became to him the mythical image of the unsurpassed Orpheus who could charm not only human beings but also animals. The health of the famous singer began to decline perceptibly, and often his surprised and frightened women admirers did

not know the cause of his sudden outbursts of anger and irritation with which the unfortunate Enrico met their tender glances, their flowers and their kisses.

Morose and sad, responding to the kisses of their hot and perfumed lips, he thought in despair: "Ah, if you were only cows, charmed by my singing! What is your adoration worth now? Nothing!"

At last Enrico's patience was exhausted. One beautiful day he said drily to his secretary, Honoria de Vietri:

"Listen to me, and please do not argue or contradict. I have decided. I want to prove to Orpheus and to his admirers that I, Enrico Sparghetti, can do as much as he, and that my talent is not limited to human beings only. Gather three or four dozen donkeys in my park in the outskirts of the city next Sunday—"

"Donkeys!" exclaimed the astonished and terrified Honoria, but the singer stamped his foot angrily and shouted at the top of his beautiful voice:

"Yes, donkeys! Donkeys, I am telling you! If you and others like you can understand me, how dare you think that donkeys could not understand me? They are very musical."

Honoria bowed his head in reverence.

"Your desire will be fulfilled, incomparable one. But it is the first time I hear that donkeys are musical—on the contrary, the proverbs, and the experience of nations have taught us that these animals are devoid of any musical or critical sense. Thus, for instance, the fable about the nightingale—"

"Are you very fond of the vulgar nightingale?" retorted the singer, adding: "Honoria, drop this slander against the donkeys. I believe there is just as much exaggeration and untruth in this as there is in the fame of that accursed Orpheus. The misfortune of the donkeys is due to the fact that they lack a voice, but not the musical sense or the appreciation of singing; their very desire to make harsh noises, which is such a tax upon them, and which gives their braying a strongly dramatic character, testifies to the fact that they are deeply musical. Whom do they hear in their life? Only the drivers, whose voices are hard and disgusting. You will see, my friend, what will happen to them when my inspired voice reaches their ears. I shall sing to them as I sang for the Brazilian Emperor, the Count, the robbers and the Queen of England.

In vain were the entreaties of the cowardly but sensible Honoria.

Believing implicitly in his wizardly power and omnipotence, Enrico would not listen to his secretary, and finally he even convinced him. "Perhaps Enrico is right after all," thought the secretary, as he went to hire the donkeys; "perhaps they are not entirely dead to art, and the power of Enrico is indeed unlimited!"

Confident of his triumph, Enrico desired to lend special pomp to this contest. He ordered that the mayor and other prominent members of the municipality be invited, in addition to his regular admirers who came any time he opened his mouth to sing. But the first three rows he reserved for the donkeys, with due apologies to the honored guests. He wanted the donkeys to be right near him while all others in the audience were to occupy the side seats and seats behind the donkeys.

One circumstance somewhat surprised and even irritated the famous singer: It was necessary to pay from three to five lire for hiring each donkey for the occasion. This was the first time in Enrico's life when, instead of the public paying him, he paid the public; but Honoria soothed him, explaining that the price paid was low as compared with the prices usually paid for front seats at his concerts; and sighing prayerfully he added:

"And if you should triumph in this contest, and I have no doubt of it any longer—I shall be perfectly justified in raising the prices for the next concerts, so you will only gain by it. The main thing is to triumph!"

"You may depend upon me," answered Enrico, laughing, thinking almost lovingly of the donkeys that did not even suspect the pleasure that was awaiting them.

III

While the workingmen were hastily building an arena for the invited guests and a platform for the singer in his park, and while the decorators were busy ornamenting the entire place with flowers, flags and small lanterns, while the whole city was talking about the daring enterprise of the gifted Sparghetti, and, divided into parties, arguing as to the outcome of the contest, Enrico and Honoria were doing their own work.

Shaken in his traditional opinion of donkeys, though not yet thoroughly convinced, Honoria de Vietri adopted all possible measures for the purpose of preparing to some extent at least these unaccustomed auditors for the coming pleasure. Having decided to spend additional

money, he kept the donkeys for three days in the park, in front of the platform, in order to accustom them to the surroundings, and carefully guarded them against anything that might agitate, grieve or irritate them, or that might upset their required spiritual equilibrium. Believing that being well fed the donkeys would be better qualified to concentrate and appreciate the singing, he fed them energetically and, with the advice of a physician, he secretly put considerable doses of bromide and other soothing medicines into their feed.

His efforts were crowned with success. On Sunday the nice-looking, carefully cleaned little donkeys, with their small, childlike feet and their pensive, even mournful eyes, looked rather like a group of transformed angels than obstinate, coarse animals; overcome with bromide and too much food, they ceased braying. Only at sunrise on Sunday two or three of the donkeys expressed in painful sounds their loud greeting to the glorious luminary, thereby waking and slightly frightening Honoria.

As for Enrico Sparghetti, he carefully considered and prepared what might, in contradiction to Honoria's utilitarian cares, be called "the spiritual food" for the donkeys. Having gone over his entire rich repertoire, the artist decided on the following selections: The first part—something lyrical, amorous and plaintive, absorbing the soul in a certain magical and somewhat sad dream.

The second part, after a brief intermission, was to be a cascade of merry and triumphant sounds, playful songs, capricious trills, as if signifying the rising of the sun after a moonlight night and the twittering of birds; and at last, the third part was to be something resolute—a tragic outburst of the passion, of the sob of life, overcome by death, the weariness of eternal parting, of hopeless and bitter love, something that would make even a stone cry! And if the rocks that gathered about Orpheus have not yet entirely lost their capacity to move, they will come forward to greet, together with the others, the triumphant singer!

Sunday arrived. The concert was scheduled for the afternoon. The Spring sun was shining dazzlingly, when the invited audience took their seats, admiring the fabulous beauty of the park and waiting with bated breath for the appearance of their idol, Enrico Sparghetti.

The first four rows, reserved for the donkeys, were transformed into small neat stalls, upholstered with red velvet. When the animals, adorned with ribbons and long plumes, occupied the front places, the

rest of the audience regarded them with a whisper of admiration; meek and pensive, their micelike glittering skin silvery under the rays of the sun, they looked magnificent! For any emergency, lest some of the donkeys might jump out too soon, they were fastened to their stalls with heavy silk cords.

And then, under the thunder of applause, Enrico Spaghetti appeared on the platform. He was somewhat pale, but resolute and handsome in his daring; as he related afterward, he had not experienced such nervousness when he appeared before emperors as he experienced this time. Responding to the applause with his usual low bow, he threw with light mockery, appreciated by the journalists, several kisses to the donkeys, and with an apathetic expression on his face, ordered his accompanist to start.

Silence reigned.

At the very first sound of his bewitching voice, which transformed everything earthly into heavenly, the hearers were charmed. They forgot altogether about the donkeys, which had aroused such alarming curiosity at first; and when the first song was followed by the second and third, no one even noticed the touching thoughtfulness, the profound attention with which the donkeys were listening to the singer. But Enrico and Honoria were rejoicing, exchanging glances, and Enrico even whispered to his accompanist significantly:

"This is a triumph!"

"Si, signor!" answered the accompanist enthusiastically and meekly.

But it seemed that the silence of the donkeys was due to other reasons than the charm and fascination of Enrico's singing, for during the fourth song, the most pathetic romance, two donkeys suddenly commenced to bray—at first, as usual, as if helplessly choking and wailing, then raising their voices to the heights of an almost prophetic outcry and winding up with the same helpless and suffering exhalations. This noise was so unexpected that the people in the rear, forgetting themselves, exclaimed: "Hush!" and Enrico, pale but polite, motioned to the accompanist to halt a while and allow the donkeys to get through braying.

But as soon as Enrico opened his mouth again, instead of two, ten, then twenty donkeys brayed out of tune, their voices mingling and their thunderous outbursts drowning not only the softest pianissimo of the singer, but his most desperate forte. In vain did the agitated

Enrico raise his voice and put all the power of expression into his fine mimicry—only at intervals, between the donkeys' braying, the people caught his heavenly trills, his sobs and his tears; now all the four dozen donkeys, infected by one another, were braying as though it were the last judgment day.

Thus ended the first unsuccessful part of the program, amid the deathly silence of the offended admirers and the dying wailings of the donkeys.

"That's impossible!" said Enrico in his dressing-room, in tears, falling on the agitated Honoria's bosom. "My vocal chords have almost snapped! Were you able to hear me? I couldn't hear my own voice!"

"Of course I heard you, my poor friend. But I told you that donkeys—"

"Oh, leave me alone!" exclaimed Enrico. "But why do they start to bray just when I open my mouth, and stop when I stop? Do you hear? They are as quiet as angels now. How is that?"

Honoria answered irresolutely.

"Yes, they are silent. Evidently your singing does have an effect upon them, and as soon as—"

"But that is stupid. This way they can't hear anything! Ah, Honoria, the Brazilian Emperor sobbed over this very song!" exclaimed the singer bitterly, large diamond tears falling from his eyes. "And how I tried for their sake! I myself cried for these donkeys—that's something I never did even for the Queen of England. . . . Oh, I'll get even with them! Down with the lyrics—I'll give them drama, and then we shall see. I'll outsing them!"

"Spare your voice, Enrico, I implore you!" cried Honoria, supported by the sobbing accompanist, who said:

"Spare it, signor!"

"Did Orpheus spare his voice? No, I'll outshout them! I'll outbray them, if there is no other way. Ring the bell!"

Amid the deathly silence of the people and the donkeys, he started the second part of the program. The people seemed agitated and fatigued, while the donkeys were fresh and calm, as if they had just redeemed themselves. But this time again all of Enrico's efforts proved futile; having commenced to bray together at his first notes, the donkeys raised their voices to a pathetic pitch and it was hard to understand whence came so much mild power in these angelic little animals!

They brayed like gushing lava, and in vain did the heavenly singer run up and down the stage, rising on tiptoe and reddening trying to outsing them—the audience saw only his open mouth, which seemed as silent as a well.

Taking advantage of a minute's pause, Enrico shouted to his accompanist:

"Look at that one, on the left side—he is quiet all the time!"

"Si, signor!"

"He will be my first pupil! Go ahead!"

"Si, signor!"

Again the donkeys brayed in unison—and Oh, horrors!—they were now joined by the one that Enrico had just hoped to have as his first pupil. This donkey proved to be the loudest of them all—incomparable in his braying power—so that any further contest became impossible without endangering the life and death of the people present. Full of fresh power and vigor, this donkey easily drowned the voice of Enrico, who had already grown hoarse, while the rest of the chorus kept painfully tearing away and choking themselves with their own voices. Then over the flowers and the seats appeared drivers with sticks, led by Honoria, who was also shouting.

Thus ended Enrico Sparghetti's contest with Orpheus, and the invited guests departed in silence, while Enrico said to the terrified Honoria in a scarcely audible tone:

"Honoria, send for the doctor. I think my voice is ruined!"

IV

Fortunately, it was a false alarm. Within a month the fatigued voice of the famous singer regained its former glory and power. At the same time, thanks to the efforts of Honoria, the incident was explained in a manner flattering to the singer. The magazines in unison attributed the incessant braying of the donkeys to the fact that they were delighted and overcome with the magnificent *bel canto* of the great artist. And the name of Orpheus was forever linked with Enrico's name.

Enrico himself, smiling, said that donkeys were good for transporting burdens and doing other hard work, but as auditors they left much to be desired, and that whoever wanted to shout a donkey was insane.

Thus fine and radiant, he jested with his friends. But no one knew,

not even Honoria, that for the rest of his life his soul suffered from disappointment, and the sight of a peaceful little donkey, industriously carrying a burden, made him quiver and aroused in him a sensation akin to panicky terror.

THE MAN WHO UNDERSTOOD WOMEN

by Elsie McCormick

"IS there a man on earth who understands women?" I exclaimed one day, while Worldly Wisdom was having tea with me.

"There is one," answered Worldly Wisdom. "I will take you to him."

And we went.

After a long, tedious journey, Worldly Wisdom pointed out a man who was grubbing for roots under a tree.

"There is the one who understands women," he said.

"But he is blind," I remarked, after I had vainly tried to engage the man in conversation.

"He is not misled by their beauty."

"And he is deaf."

"He is not deceived by the soft sounds they utter."

"Besides, he does not seem to be especially wise."

"He has no imagination to dazzle him and no theories to lead him astray."

"And why in the world does he live by himself in this dense wood?"

"Did I not tell you that he understood women?" answered Worldly Wisdom.

A FLOOD

*by George Moore**

IN his dreams he was in very cold, muddy water full of little waves, but he didn't mind these. he could keep himself above them by treading water and putting forth all his strength. But the waves rose higher, slapping him in the face and often in the mouth, and he had so much trouble to get his breath that it seemed to him a simpler plan to sink deeper, which he did, and lying, quite natural and comfortable, among rocks, he listened to a dinning noise above his head, hoping that it would cease. At last he opened his eyes.

"It's this infernal rain on the roof that makes me dream," he said. A bed had been made up for him in the kitchen on three chairs, and when he awoke he found himself sitting bolt upright with his arms bent, his legs stiff and numbed with cold. The hearth was full of ashes with a last spark fading in the dawn light, and catching an end of his blanket he rubbed his hands against it, tumbled over a chair. And going to the window he marvelled to see the bonoughs swimming in the piggeries, with the sow striving to break out of danger. Beyond in mid-river Peter, the house-dog, on his chain was swimming. There was a greyness in the air.

"The beginning of a late dawning," Tom said to himself "A drowning day it surely is!" And his heart misgave him strangely when one after the other the hens left the coop and after a short flight fell into the river. The cock crew, and Tom waited to see if his stronger wings would carry him to yonder shore, but the staircase behind him creaked, and turning from the flooding river he saw old Daddy Lupton, awful in his nightshirt, like Death himself coming to bid him good-morning.

"Well," said Daddy, "What do'ee think about the jade now? She makes one feel young again. The biggest flood we've had these sixty years." And babbling his recollections of a great flood of eighty years ago, in which he had nearly lost his life, he followed Tom to the window telling how the water came down the valley faster than a horse could gallop. "All my brothers and sisters were drowned, father and mother too, but my cradle floated right away as far as Harebridge, where it was picked up by a party in a boat. And there h'ain't been no

* This story does not appear in the Carra edition of the complete works of Moore and it appeared only in *The Smart Set* and in a small limited edition published by Groff Conklin

flood to speak of since then; we sleep sound enough, though the rain be on the roof."

"We must wake 'em," said Tom. He ran upstairs calling out, and in a few minutes the pointsman and his family were standing in the kitchen: John Lupton, a tall man with a long neck and thin, square shoulders, a red beard and small queer eyes and hands freckled and hairy, and Margaret Lupton, his wife, a pleasant, portly woman of forty, with soft blue eyes and regular features. The daughter, Liz, took after her father, a thin-shouldered, thin-featured girl, with small, ardent eyes and dark reddish, crinkly hair, whereas Billy reproduced his mother's undetermined face, blue, timid eyes, plainly more of a girl than a boy, despite his curiosity for Tom's boat.

"Shall we go in the boat, father?"

"What boat, sonny?"

"Tom's boat, to be sure."

"We needn't all go together."

"My boat is far enough from 'ere by this time," said Tom, "or most like she's at the bottom of the river. I tied her last night to the old willow."

He and Liz were to be married at the end of the week, and yesterday being Sunday he had rowed himself across at sundown; and the hours after supper had gone by pleasantly, his arm round Liz's waist, till the time came for him to bid her good-night. But on seeing the swollen river she had turned her pretty, freckled face to his and dissuaded him, and they had returned to the cottage.

"I never seed the river rise so quickly afore," said Lupton.

"I did. I did."

It was Daddy that answered. He was still in his nightshirt, and his last tooth shook in his white beard.

"Go and dress 'eeself, father. And why, mother, don't 'ee light the fire? The morning is that rare cold we'll all be the better for a cup of tea."

"Yes, father, I won't be long now;" and she began breaking sticks. Whilst the kettle was boiling Tom told them that the pigs had broken out of their styas. They lamented the loss of their winter food, and Billy burst into tears on hearing that Peter had gone away, swimming after his kennel.

"Come, let us sit down to breakfast," Lupton said.

But they had hardly tasted their tea when Billy cried out:

"Father, father, the water be coming in under the door yonder. Take me on 'ee knee, father. 'Ee did promise to take me to Harebridge. But if I drown I shall never see the circus."

Lupton took the little chap on his knee.

"There will be no danger of that. Grandfather will tell 'ee that this be nothing to the floods he knew when he was a little boy."

The water continued to come in under the door, collecting where the asphalted floor had been worn, and they watched it rising out of these slight holes and coming towards the table. It came at first very slowly, and then suddenly it rose over their knees, and while Mrs. Lupton took the baby out of the cot the others searched for tea, sugar, bacon, eggs, coal, and candles.

"We shall be wanting all these things," Lupton said, "for the water may keep us upstairs for hours to come."

And they were very wet when they assembled in Lupton's bedroom. Lupton emptied his big boots out of the window and called on Tom to do the same; Liz wrung out her petticoats; and standing round the table they supped their tea and ate some slices of bread and butter. The baby had been laid asleep on the bed, and Daddy sat by the baby softening his bread in his mug of tea, mumbling to himself, his fading brain full of incoherent recollections.

"The folk in them fine houses will be surprised to see the water at the bottom of their parks," said Lupton, to break an oppressive silence.

"They be like to live so high up the water will never reach them," Mrs. Lupton answered.

"It h'ain't like them to think for to send us 'elp."

"They 'aven't no boats up yonder," said Tom. "They'll be a good mile up from the river."

"Tom, dear, it's a pity your boat be gone, for you might have rowed me right into Harebridge."

"Yes, Liz, if you'd set still I might have taken 'ee through them currents; or as likely we might have gotten sucked under by an eddy, or a hole be knocked in the boat by some floating baulk."

"I be lighter than Liz; would 'ee take me, Tom?" said Billy.

As the tops of the apple trees were still visible they judged the depth of the water to be about ten feet. Cattle passed the window, some swimming strong and well, others nearly exhausted. A dead horse whirled past, its poor neck stretched out lamentably, and they all

laughed at the fox that floated so peacefully in the middle of a drowned hen-roost. The apples came by in great numbers; Billy forgot his fears in his desire to clutch some; and a little later they saw two great trees rolling towards the pointsman's box.

"There she goes!" cried Lupton. "And how she do swim! She'd put me into the quay at Harebridge as well as a steam packet."

Pointing to a post, Liz said there was no sign of it ten minutes before. Lupton was not so sure, and when the post disappeared everybody began to wonder what the cause of the flood might be, and everybody waited for Lupton to speak. At first he was loth to tell them that he could only understand that the embankments up yonder at the factories had given way; and to cheer them, he added: "They'll not forget the pointsman. A boat will be sent." As Lupton said these words Billy asked his grandfather to tell them if the flood was as big as the great flood of sixty years ago that had carried an entire village away.

"That was a flood and a big one, but the biggest of all was eighty years ago, when my cradle came down the current to Harebridge and stuck fast in the alder." And he began to tell a story of other children whose cradles had been carried right down to the sea, frightening everybody with his loquacity.

"Tom, 'as 'ee a bit of Baccy to give to Daddy to stop his jaw with?" said John Lupton.

Tom fumbled in his pockets, and when their eyes met each read his own thoughts in the other's face.

"We must be doing something, that's certain," said Tom. "But what shall we be doing?"

"Yes, we must be stirring," Lupton answered. And without another word he began to look about the room. "Now, if we 'ad but a few bits of timber we could make a raft. It's a pity that bedstead is of iron."

Tom, who had gone back to the window, cried suddenly:

"Give a hand here, John, for 'ee was talking about a raft and blowed if I 'aven't gotten one."

And looking over Tom's shoulder Lupton saw that he had caught a few planks tied together—a slender raft that somebody up yonder had launched as a last hope.

"Very likely so," said Lupton; "anyhow, it's ours. It might carry one of us."

"Yes, one of us might chance his life on it and bring back 'elp."

"That's right enough; it's an off-chance, but one of us had better risk it. Get along, lad, get along, and come back in a boat."

"Don't leave me, Tom," cried Liz. "Let us be drowned together."

"Be 'ee mazed, lass?" said Lupton. "Tom will manage right well on them planks, and he'll come back in a boat."

"No, father, no. I'd sooner die with Tom than live without him."

"'Ee ain't the only one; 'ee'd better let him go, or yonder church will see no wedding party next Monday. Tom, get astride of them planks at once."

"I think I'd better take this 'ere shutter with me." And while it was lifted from its hinges Lupton lashed two broom handles together.

"Not much of a punt pole, but the best I can give, and maybe it will get 'ee out of the current."

But Liz held Tom back.

"Yes, Liz, Tom loves 'ee, and that is why he must go. Come, girl, hands off. I don't want to be rough with 'ee, but Tom must take the risk of them planks. Now, Tom."

And away he went in a swirl, trying his best to reach bottom with his broom handles; but the raft rolled in the current, and Liz's last sight of her lover was when he attempted to seize some willow branches. The raft slid from under his feet, and he fell into the flood.

"He's gone from 'ee now, and we shall soon follow after if we don't bestir ourselves."

"It matters naught to me now," said Liz.

"I ne'er see one mazed like 'ee afore."

"But I seed many. Sixty years ago all the sweethearts were parted, and by the score. The jade got them, here a girl and there a boy—all but Daddy Lupton, for a wise woman said she shouldn't get him, and her word came true. I ain't afeard of 'er. I've seen 'er in worse tantrums than today. It's the rheumatics that I'm afeard of. These 'ere walls will be that damp, will be that . . ." The old man's voice died away in the whiteness of his beard.

At that moment three tiles fell from the roof; a large hole appeared in one of the walls, and they all felt that the house was falling about them bit by bit. But the immediate danger was from the great banks that the current swept down. If any one of these were to strike the house, Lupton said, it must topple over into the flood; and lest their luck shouldn't last, Lupton took a sheet from the bed and climbed on to the roof.

"See a boat coming, Liz?" her mother asked, for Liz sat looking towards some willows as if she saw something.

"No boat will come for me. I want no boat to come for me."

"Come, Liz, come, Liz. I wouldn't 'ave 'e talk like that," her mother answered. The baby began to cry for the breast, and while suckling him Mrs. Lupton raised her head to her husband sitting on the broken wall; but he waved the sheet so despairingly that she did not dare to ask him if a boat were coming.

"I can't sit up 'ere any longer," he said at last. "Let us do something. I don't mind what, so long as it keeps me from thinking."

"I think we'd better say our prayers," said Mrs. Lupton.

"Prayers? No, I can say no prayers. I'm too bothered. I want something that will keep me from thinking. The babbling of that water will drive us mad if we don't do something. Let us tell stories. Liz, don't sit there looking through the room, or what's left of it. You read stories in the papers; can't you tell us one of them?"

Liz shook her head. He asked for the paper. She answered that it was downstairs, and begged that she might take his place on the corner of the wall and wave the sheet on the chance that a boat might be passing within hail.

"She don't pay no attention to what we're saying," said Lupton. "Now that Tom's gone I think she'd just as lief make away with herself. . . . And what may 'ee be smiling at so heartily, father? 'Ee and the baby are the only two that can smile this morning."

"What be I smiling at? I heard 'ee speak just now of stories. I can say one, lots of 'em."

"Then tell us a story, father, and a good one. 't'll keep our thoughts from that babbling water."

"Well, I was just a-thinking. It be now seventy years ago . . ."

"Well, tell us about it."

"I've said it was nigh seventy years ago; I was a growing lad at the time. I remember it as if it was yesterday. Me and Bill Slater was pals. At that time Bill was going to be married. I can see her now, a fine elegant lass, for all the world like our Liz. It had been raining for weeks and weeks—much the same kind of weather as we've had lately, only worse, and the river . . ."

"We don't want to hear about the river; we want to forget it. I suppose 'ee wants to tell us that Bill Slater and his lass was drowned? We don't want that sort of story, we wants a cheerful story with lots of happiness in it."

"I only knows stories about those that the river took—plenty of 'em, plenty of 'em. The jade didn't get me, for a wise woman said that she would never get me."

"Did she say, Daddy, that them that was with 'ee was safe too?"

Daddy was only sure of his own safety; and waking suddenly, he said: "I've heard John say that 'ee would banish thinking with something. Us better have some cards then. Cards will wake us up."

"The old chap's right," said Lupton. "Where be the cards? Be they downstairs too? Where's Liz?" Lupton climbed to her place, and after looking round he turned to those in the room and shook his head. "I'm afraid Liz has gone after her sweetheart."

"Very likely," said Daddy. "The jade always gets them in the end. Where be the cards?"

"Yes, where be the cards?" Lupton answered almost savagely. "Be they downstairs, mother?"

"No, John; they be in the drawer of the table."

"Then, let's have them out. What shall we play? Half-penny nap? Come, mother, and Billy too, and Daddy. Come, pull your chairs round. I gave 'ee six pence yesterday, father. Find them out; 'ee can't have spent them; and, mother, have 'ee any coppers?"

"I've near a shilling in coppers. That will do for Billy and myself."

As there were only three chairs the table was pulled up to the bed where Daddy was sitting.

"Come, let us play, let us play," Lupton cried impatiently.

"I'm thinking of the baby," said Mrs. Lupton. "How unsuspecting he do sleep there!"

"Never mind the baby, mother; think of your cards."

After playing some time Lupton found that he had lost three pence. "I never seed such luck!" he exclaimed.

They played another round; Lupton went nap, and again he lost.

"Perhaps it will be them that loses that'll be saved," he said, shuffling the cards.

"Father, I can't play," said Billy.

"Why can't 'ee play, my boy? Ain't mother a-teaching 'ee?"

"Yes, father, but I can't think of the cards; dead things be floating past the window. May I go and sit where I can't see them?"

"Yes, my boy, come and sit on my knee. Look over my cards, but 'ee mustn't tell them what I've gotten."

"Grandfather seems to be winning; he has gotten all the coppers, father."

"Yes, my boy, grandfather be winning."

"And what will he do with the winnings if he be drowned, father?"

"Grandfather don't think he will be drowned."

The old man chuckled and turned over his coppers. His winnings meant a double allowance of tobacco and a glass of ale, and he thought of the second glass of ale he would have if he won again.

"Whose turn is it to play?" said Daddy.

"Mine," said Lupton, "and I'll go nap again."

"'E'll go nap again!"

Lupton lost once more, but this time instead of cursing his luck he remained silent, and at that moment the rush of water beneath their feet sounded more ominous than ever.

"I'll play no longer," said Lupton. "I dunno what I be doing. There's naught in my poor head but the babbling of that water."

A tile slid down the roof, they sprang to their feet, and then they heard a splash. The old man played with his winnings, and Billy began to cry.

"It's sure and certain enough now that no help will come for us," said Mrs. Lupton, "Let's put away the cards and say our prayers, and 'ee might tell us a verse out of the Bible, John."

"Very well, let's have a prayer. Father, give over counting your money."

"Then no one be coming to save us?" cried Billy. "I don't want to drown, father. I be too young to drown. Grandfather's too old and baby's too young to think much about drowning. But if we drown to-day, father, I shall never see the circus."

"Kneel down, my boy; perhaps God might save us if we prayed to him."

"Oh, God, merciful Saviour, who has power over all things, save us. Oh, Lord, save us."

"Go on praying, mother," Lupton said as he rose from his knees, and taking another sheet from the bed he climbed to the top of the broken wall; but he had hardly reached it when some bricks gave way and he fell backward and drowned. Mrs. Lupton prayed intermittently, and every now and then a tile splashed into the water.

"The way to manage 'er is to take 'er easy. She won't stand no bullying, and them giddy young folks will bully 'er, so she always goes for 'em."

Five or six tiles fell, the house rocked a little, and they could feel the water lifting the floor under their feet.

"Mother," said Billy. The child was so calm, so earnest in his manner, that he seemed suddenly to have grown older. "Mother dear, tell

me the truth.—Be I going to drown? We have prayed together, but God don't seem like saving us. I'm afraid, mother; bain't you afraid? Father's gone and Liz's gone and Tom's gone, all except grandfather and us. Grandfather and the baby don't seem afraid. Mother, let me 'ave your 'and; 'ee won't lose hold of me?"

Mrs. Lupton took the baby from the bed and looked at him, and when she looked up she saw the old man playing with the coppers he had won.

"Does drowning hurt very much, mother?"

The wall wavered about them, some bricks fell out of it. Billy was struck by one, struggled a little way, and fell through the floor. The floor broke again and another piece of the roof came away, and Mrs. Lupton closed her eyes and waited for death. But death did not seem to come, and when she opened her eyes she saw that the floor had snapped at her feet, and the old man was standing behind her.

"A darned narrow escape!" he muttered. "As near as I have had yet."

"They're gone, they be all gone, all of them—baby and all."

"'Ee must have let him slip when the roof came in."

"I let baby slip!" And looking down she saw the child floating among broken things.

"Well, that was a narrow escape!" chimed the quaking voice of the octogenarian. I'm sore afraid the house is in a bad way. I seed many like. . ."

By some great beams the south wall still held firm, and with it the few feet of floor on which they were standing.

"They be bound to send a boat afore long, or else the wise woman . . . Everything's gone—table, cards, and a shilling in coppers."

"They're all gone. Everything is gone."

"Yes, the jade's got 'em. She's got near every one I knew at one time or another."

Then the wild grief of the woman seemed to wake reason in Daddy's failing brain. Her eyes were fixed on the bodies of her husband and child dashed to and fro and sucked under by the current, appearing and disappearing among the wreckage.

"I can't grieve like that; I ken grieve no more. I'm too old. And all excepting me baccy and the rheumatics are the same to me now."

"Saved!" cried a voice. "Give way, my lads, give way."

"Saved, and the others be gone!" cried Mrs. Lupton; and as the boat approached from one side she flung herself into the flood from the other.

"Are you the only one left?" cried a man as the boat came alongside.

"Yes, the jade 'as got all the others. There they be, down there; and my daughter-in-law has just gone after them, jumped right in after them. But it was told by a wise woman that the jade would never get me, and her words comes true."

"Now then, old gent, let me get hold of you. Be careful where you step. Do nothing to risk your valuable life! There you are, safe, safe from everything but the rheumatics."

"They be very bad at times, and I must be careful of myself this winter."

FREEDOM

by Margaret Widdemer

I can be free of any
Who come about my door,
For life can show a hundred roads,
And still may show me more—

My heart's friend laughed to all the world
The grief I told by night,
Yet still the dawn has perfumed winds
And still the day is bright;

My old love kissed another lass
And thought I did not see:
I bade him take his joy of her,
And laughed and wandered free,

A little pang on passing
And then the world is new—
I can be free of any, . . .
But you, my dear, but you!

AN EPILOGUE TO LOVE

by Arthur Symonds

Dear, how we loved each other, you and I.
Not kissing lips are closer in a kiss
Than heart to heart were we, and eye to eye.

Days came and went, and with the day my love;
There's rapping at the door; ah, who is this?
This, in the mauve hat and the mantle of mauve!

And then our little dinners, just we two,
So happily alone amid a crowd,
And so proud the men all looked at you.

And certain stars of midnight, good to see
Waveringly through fallen hair, a cloud:
The stars at midnight from my balcony.

All's over now: your little hand no more
Sets the gay echoes ringing on the stairs,
Chiming a carillon upon my door.

And how we wept at parting; how I heard
The last good-bye, and felt a world of cares
Heavily lapse upon me at the word.

And how I missed you as I went about,
Hungering for your feast of love and youth.
. . . A month has passed: oh Love, to have found out.

What I had never guessed while you were here,
The hateful and the comfortable truth,
How well I can get on without you, dear!

"ALL FOR ONE AND ONE FOR ALL"

by Dorothy Canfield

IT was in a shady nook on "Flirtation," where the rocks sloped directly from their feet to the Hudson. With a reckless disregard of regulations, the cadet had unfastened the top hook of his collar and, with his hands clasped behind his head, was gazing meditatively at the girl who was opening a box of candy. It looked like the regulation arrangement on "Flirtation," but it was not. The girl was from New Hampshire, and had a sense of humor.

Besides, she was evidently expectant. She arranged her skirts comfortably, tilted her parasol at an angle which shaded the cadet's head as well as her own, and then said, "Now, Allan, you promised you'd tell me all about it. There's no reason for putting it off."

The cadet rubbed his close-cropped head thoughtfully. "I'll tell it on one condition—that you don't interrupt. I don't believe you can help it, but I warn you now, that if you break in a single time I won't finish the story."

The girl laid the candy-box on one side, crossed her heart, and, raising eyes to the Spring-blue sky, chanted solemnly:

"Honest and true, honest and true,
Lay me down and cut me in two!"

The cadet laughed, and then grew serious. "You're not in the proper frame of mind. This is the story of my engagement I'm going to tell you. It's no funny business—being engaged to be married! Makes a fellow do some thinking."

"Well, if I were the girl, I must say I'd enjoy having you take such a funereal view of it!"

"That," said the cadet, as he reached for the candy-box, "is the last speech I won't count as an interruption."

"I'm going to start in by saying that you don't know the girl, but that she's a wonder! It all happened about a year and a half ago—when she'd been coming up to the Point for several months, to hops and things. She was the gayest little 'fem' you ever saw—always cracking jokes and laughing like a chime of bells.

"You know our set of six fellows, and how we always hang together. Well, we were together on this proposition all right! We thought she

was about the funniest little girl that ever came along. She was always saying something you didn't think she was going to. I remember she was the only girl I ever saw who had something new to say when we told her we called our room-mates our 'wives.' And I tell you no 'spoonoid' had any chance around her. She's got the prettiest eyes, that look as though they'd be just great for looking soft, but she kept them snapping so with fun that there wasn't any use trying to do the spoon.

"Well, a year ago last Fall, when I was a second-class man, I was sitting in my room one evening, boning on math. I'd been working like a horse trying to 'max' my calculus, and I was as grouchy as a bear. My 'wife' was not any company, for he'd been 'doing area' ever since two o'clock, and had turned in so dead tired you couldn't have waked him with an ax. I was getting lonesomer and lonesomer, and feeling more and more as though I wanted a blow-out of some kind to put some life into me, when there was a whoop at the door and the five fellows of the gang came in, all talking at once. Puddenhead had a letter, waving it in the air, and the only thing I could get out of them was that Helen was engaged. I had two Helens on the string about that time, and I was considerably excited till after about five minutes they got smoothed down enough for me to make out that they meant this girl I'm telling about. I hadn't thought of her at all. She wasn't the kind you'd ever think of as sobering down enough to get engaged. Puddenhead had had a letter from a girl in Weston Center, where Helen lived, and she said Helen's engagement to a 'cit' named Beardsley was just announced. Well, we were great pals of Helen's, and we were sore that she hadn't told us anything about it. Puddenhead said, 'Think of her nerve! She's coming up to a hop to-morrow night just as though nothing had happened. She thinks she's going to fool us. We'll just let her know that she can't get ahead of us with her practical jokes. Let's meet her as the 'bus comes up to the top of the hill and shout out "congratulations!" till they can hear us on the other side of Parade Ground.'

"I was just going to say I was game for that, when 'Big' Marshall began jumping up and down and hollering, 'I got you beat! I got you beat! I got an idea that beats that all to frazzles! Let's all six of us never let on we've heard a thing, and then all propose to her, heavy-tragedy style, during the hop—take on as though we were broken-hearted, and then have the laugh on her the next day.'

"Say, that struck us all right, all right! We just went into the air. I could just see Helen's funny eyes crinkling up into her jolly laugh when we told her the next day. We laughed so, fixing up our different proposals, that we almost went into fits, and I was so tickled when I went to bed, I just lay there and shook. To think we could turn the joke on Helen that way!

"We could hardly wait for the hop, and when my dance with Helen came I proposed to sit it out on the balcony overlooking the Hudson, and I fairly shivered for fear she'd want to dance; but she didn't, and we went down the stairs together, me beginning to put on the proper solemn air.

"It was moonlight—a warm October evening. The Hudson looked like a black diamond with rubies all around it where the lights of the shore gleamed. There wasn't a cloud in the sky, and just the sweetest Autumn smell in the air. Oh, it was the proper stage-setting, all right! I lifted Helen up to the broad balustrade—same way I had lots of times before—and then I turned and gazed down the river, trying to look romantic. There never was a Doanes from Alabama who couldn't look romantic, when he put his mind to it, and I reckon I came up to the family standard. Helen was looking some romantic herself—staring down at her hands in her lap. I tell you, she looked pretty—any girl would, out there in the moonlight—but she looked like a regular little fairy.

"Well, I drew a long breath and started in. 'Helen,' I said, in a deep voice—I had to speak very low because there were lots of other people sitting out dances all around us—'Helen!' Then I went down about an octave, 'dear!' I thought right there was where the fun would start, but Helen never stirred—just sat and looked down at her hands in her lap.

"That made me mad, 'cause I was sure she was thinking so about that 'cit' Beardsley that she didn't even hear me. So I took on a load of Alabama fireworks, and whirled in in good earnest. Say, I won't tell you what I said to her, but you can just bet it was red-hot! I was going to give her her money's worth. I told her she was the only one in the world for me—that I had my future all fixed up with her in the midst of it, and it would be the death of me to unfix my ideas, that I would quit the service if there wasn't any hope for me—oh, you just imagine what an Alabama Doanes would do, turned loose with his imagination and without any fear of consequences, and you'll have me!

"Helen never said a thing—she couldn't, I was executing such a rapid-fire effect in my delivery—and when I lowered down my voice to nothing at all and said in a breath, 'Helen! Helen! Helen!' getting in an extra thrill every time, she just gave a little shiver, and that was all.

"By-and-by I got through—even a Doanes from Alabama, can't keep it up forever!—and, besides, our dance was not going to last for all time, and I wanted to give the other fellows a chance. There was a long silence, and then Helen raised her head and looked at me.

"Say, it was a good thing I was leaning up against the balustrade, 'cause if it hadn't been for that I'd have fallen right down in a fit. The hills on the other side of the Hudson began to waver up and down, and in a minute they sprang right up and hit me on the head. Helen was looking at me with eyes like stars, and they changed every minute and got softer and softer till I was just melted and floated away in 'em. You wouldn't think she ever could have laughed out of them, they were so sweet and solemn. Her lips moved, and I could just hear her say, 'Allan, my Allan!'

"Then she did the prettiest thing I ever saw a girl do. There were a lot of 'spoonoids' sitting around, and we couldn't either of us do anything without their seeing us. She just brushed her lips with the tips of her fingers and then dropped her hand down on mine as it lay on the balustrade. It was the sweetest thing—but honest, it's no joke, I felt an electric shock that made me see stars. I was about the most startled and scared individual you ever saw, and what with that and my general feeling of goneness, I know I must have turned pale. She leaned over toward me and said, in the prettiest, lowest voice, that just went through me like a knife, 'Why, Allan, you must have known how I felt!'

"I gasped out something about her always jollyng so a fellow couldn't know *what* she felt, and she said, reproachfully, 'Oh, dear boy, that was only to shelter myself. I was so afraid you would know and despise me.'

"I took another brace, and murmured some disjointed questions about the 'cit' Beardsley, but she caught me up short. 'You didn't believe that gossip! How little you can have known how—why, Allan, dear, sometimes when the slow old 'bus has been crawling up the hill from the station I've been fairly faint to think I should see you so soon. Do you remember that shoe-string you broke off, one afternoon, down on "Flirtation"? Now, listen, I'm going to tell you how foolish I am.

I went back the next day and picked it up, and I've always kept it—think! all I've ever had of yours! *Poor Helen!*

"I was just dissolving in thin air all this time—I was, for a fact! I couldn't feel the ground under my feet, and I had to hold on to the balustrade, hard, I was so light-headed and dizzy. Just then 'Big' Marshall came running out to get Helen for the next dance. I helped her down, and she gave my arm a little hidden pat, that couldn't have hurt worse if she'd hit me with a hammer! I watched her walk away with 'Big,' feeling meaner and meaner, till, as she turned and gave one backward look toward me, I just shriveled up to nothing at all. I moved around the corner to a place where I knew nobody'd come, and fell down on a chair, and took my head in my hands and did some tall thinking! First off, I took about an hour calling myself bad names. I'd think of the light in her eyes as she had looked at me, and curse myself for about the lowest, meanest specimen of humanity that ever drew breath. Then I lost my head for a while, I was so wild at the thought of what it meant to *me*! There I was—I wouldn't even be out of the Academy for two years, with fourteen years after that to wait for a captaincy—at least fourteen—and already engaged! I thought of excuses I could make—couldn't I tell her we had insanity in the family, or that I was already engaged, or that—then I'd think of her voice as she had said, 'Allan, *my* Allan!' and feel too low-down to live, for having the heart to think of anything but how to make it up to her for the beastly thing I'd done. But you know me—I'm the kind, who, the minute he's tied to anything, *anything*, is wild to get loose—*me* engaged to be married, before I was even a second lieutenant! Then I'd think of Helen again, sweet, jolly little Helen, with all the fun gone out of her eyes and just the lovelight in them, and I'd brace up for a minute—only the next I'd think of always and always living up to what she thought I meant and never for a minute letting her know, 'cause an Alabama Doanes couldn't do less, and then I'd feel suffocated and as though I couldn't—I just *couldn't*! I groaned, out there by myself, as though I were going to die, and I felt as though I were—I wished I could!

"I was all in a tremble when I stood up finally, but my mind was made up. I was a Doanes from Alabama, and I wasn't going to go back on the woman who loved me—if it killed me! So I marched up the stairs to the hop, and found 'Army Blue' just being played, and in a minute the drums sounded and everybody was rushing around to get

his girl home and himself back to barracks before taps. I tried to see Helen, but she was going home in the 'bus, and I only had a chance to say good night. All the other fellows were there, and all of a sudden I remembered about them! How could I ever explain to them so that they wouldn't know what had happened? They, of course, must have gone right on with the programme and had no idea it was not Beardsley she'd refused them for, but me! They went up and said 'Good night,' kind of melancholy, still carrying out their parts, and then we all stood together after the 'bus drove off. Helen was sitting on the end, and what do you think she did? Right there before all those fellows, she leaned out of the open door and blew a kiss to me! Say, that finished me all right. When I came to, I found the other fellows had gone on, and I walked over to barracks alone, making resolutions every step I took. If a proud, sensitive girl like Helen goes so far as to show her feelings like that, there is only one thing for a gentleman and a cadet to do, and that is to come up to the scratch.

"That's what I kept saying over all night. I tell you, I didn't sleep much, and I didn't need reveille to wake me up in the morning. I was planning what I would say to Helen when I saw her the next afternoon. The first time I saw her would be the worst. After chapel, though, her aunt—her aunt is Captain Wadleigh's wife—told me that Helen had been telegraphed for to come to New York to see an uncle off on the steamer, and that she had left on the first train. Say, maybe I didn't feel like a reprieved prisoner! I caught the first long breath I'd had since the night before. But in a minute I knew I'd have to write; and that's what I did! All that afternoon I wrote and tore up and wrote and tore up, trying to fix just the letter she ought to get. I tried to think what I'd want a fellow to write if I were a girl just engaged to him, and then I'd write it. I threw in some, for good measure, but every time I read it over I was sure that wasn't the way a Doanes from Alabama would do it, and I'd tear it up and start all over again. Once I caught myself thinking what a shame it was to spend a whole precious Sunday afternoon doing that—and then I laid down the pen, and just groaned and groaned! For it came over me like a crack of thunder that it wasn't only *that* Sunday afternoon, but every single one for always and always that I couldn't have to myself. But I gritted my teeth, and thought of Helen's face as she leaned out of the door of the 'bus, all soft and quivery with joy, and I went on writing.

"I got some sort of a letter done, and was just starting out to post it,

when Captain Wadleigh's orderly came up and said that Miss Helen had left a note for me and wished me to go over to the house and get it. I started over there and posted the letter on the way. When I got to the gate I saw Puddenhead and 'Big' going up the walk, and two of the other fellows were looking out of the windows. I thought, 'Oh, Lord! Helen's probably left a note for all of them announcing our engagement. I won't have to put up a bluff or anything!'

"Mrs. Wadleigh was sitting inside talking to the fellows already there, and in a minute in came Adams, and there we were, all six. Mrs. Wadleigh got up and went over to her desk. 'You boys and Helen are such jokers!' she said, 'I don't know what the joke is this time, but I suppose it is some of Helen's nonsense. She asked me to give you all one of these.' With that she began handing around some little notes. I knew what it meant all right, and I waited a minute before I opened mine, for I didn't feel as though I had any right to read what Helen had written there. When I broke the seal an engraved card fell out and, as I looked at it, I got the shock of my life.

" 'Mr. and Mrs. — request the honor of your presence at the marriage of their daughter Helen to Eugene Beardsley —'

"My heart turned over five times in rapid succession, and I had a goneeness that would have made an elephant feel weak. When I came to, there were all the other fellows sitting there as though somebody had knocked 'em on the head with a club. I heard myself saying, feebly, 'But she kissed her hand to me . . .' when all the others came out of their trance to say, 'Why, that was for *me*!' 'For *me*!' 'For *me*!'

"Just then we heard a funny noise, and there was that 'wife' of mine back of us, just gasping for breath, and so full of laughter he was black in the face. As we turned around and looked at him kind of dazed and fish-eyed, he was so tickled he gave a whoop, and fell on the floor in a fit. That blamed scalawag hadn't been asleep at all that night, and he had gone and told Helen all about our scheme; and say, what do you think? The little actress, she'd accepted the whole six of us the same way she had me!"

At this point the girl from New Hampshire, who had been listening seriously, broke into a shout of delight and laughed till the tears rolled down her cheeks. She checked herself for an instant to ejaculate: "Talk about poetic justice!" and then went off into another peal. Finally, still shaking with mirth, her handkerchief at her eyes, she inquired: "What happened to your 'wife'?"

The cadet helped himself to a large chocolate-drop. "It was the funniest thing about him! We were all so sort o' weak and shaken by our scare and the sudden relief, that we never thought to take it out on him! Blessed if he didn't get off scot-free! But the next time Helen came to the Point"—here there was a pause as he thoughtfully finished the chocolate-drop—"well, on the whole, I reckon I'd better not tell you about the next time Helen came to the Point!"

ROSE GARLAND

by Richard le Gallienne

To the Rose, from one of her Nightingales

To thee, my Rose, whose heart
Against me closes,
I send—where'er thou art—
This Book of Roses.

'Tis sweet, as fits thy praise,
Thine and the Rose's,
Sweet when it opens,
Sweet, too, when it closes.

To thee thy Nightingale
Of many poses
Sends here these nightingales
Of many roses;

Lightnings may flicker round my head,
And all the world seem doom,
If you, like a wild rose, will walk
Strangely into my room.

If only my sad heart may hear
Your voice of faery laughter—
What matters to my grateful heart
What thunder follows after?

RESURRECTION

All the wide world is but the thought of you:
Who made you out of wonder and of dew?
Was it some god with tears in his deep eyes,
Who loved a woman white and overwise,
That strangely put all violets in your hair—
And put into your face all distance, too?

I said—I care not if I can
But look into her eyes again,
But lay my hand within her hand
Just once again.

Though all the world be filled with snow
And fire and cataclysmal storm,
I'll cross it just to lay my head
Upon her bosom warm.

RESURRECTION

by Theresa Helburn

Love met me not till I was old,
But then she came with arms wide-spread,
With tapestries of woven gold
My barren path she carpeted.

She hung strange blossoms in my hair,
And bade the silent birds to sing,
Till youth awoke, amazed, to share
This resurrection of the spring.

And I, whose path had been with pain
Forgot the sorrow and the cold;
The future spread its wings again,—
I was not young till I was old.

ONE DAY MORE

by Joseph Conrad*

CHARACTERS

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*a retired coasting skipper*)

JOSIAH CARVIL (*formerly a shipbuilder—a widower—blind*)

HARRY HAGBERD (*son of CAPTAIN HAGBERD, who as a boy ran away from home*)

A LAMPLIGHTER

BESSIE CARVIL (*daughter of JOSIAH CARVIL*)

PLACE: *A small seaport.* TIME: *The present—early autumn, toward dusk.*

SCENE—*To right, two yellow brick cottages belonging to CAPTAIN HAGBERD, one inhabited by himself, the other by the CARVILS. A lamppost in front. The red roofs of the town in the background. A seawall to left.*

SCENE I

The curtain rises disclosing CARVIL and BESSIE moving away from the sea wall. BESSIE about twenty-five. Black dress; black straw hat. A lot of mahogany-colored hair loosely done up. Pale face. Full figure. Very quiet. CARVIL, blind, unwieldy. Reddish whiskers; slow, deep voice produced without effort. Immovable, big face.

CARVIL (*hanging heavily on BESSIE's arm*) Careful! Go slow! (*Stops; BESSIE waits patiently.*) Want your poor blind father to break his neck? (*Shuffles on.*) In a hurry to get home and start that everlasting yarn with your chum the lunatic?

BESSIE

I am not in a hurry to get home, father.

CARVIL

Well, then, go steady with a poor blind man. Blind! Helpless! (*Strikes the ground with his stick.*) Never mind! I've had time to make enough money to have ham and eggs for breakfast every morning—thank God! And thank God, too, for it, girl. You haven't known a

* This is the only play Conrad ever attempted. It first appeared in *The Smart Set* before the Conrad vogue began. W. H. Wright bought it from F. N. Doubleday, Conrad's American agent and publisher for \$100. Mr. Doubleday was astonished that Wright should want to publish it.

single hardship in all the days of your idle life. Unless you think that a blind, helpless father—

BESSIE

What is there for me to be in a hurry for?

CARVIL

What did you say?

BESSIE

I said there was nothing for me to hurry home for.

CARVIL

There is, though. To yarn with a lunatic. Anything to get away from your duty.

BESSIE

Captain Hagberd's talk never hurt you or anybody else.

CARVIL

Go on. Stick up for your only friend.

BESSIE

Is it my fault that I haven't another soul to speak to?

CARVIL (*snarling*)

It's mine, perhaps. Can I help being blind? You fret because you want to be gadding about—with a helpless man left all alone at home. Your own father, too.

BESSIE

I haven't been away from you half a day since mother died.

CARVIL (*viciously*)

He's a lunatic, our landlord is. That's what he is. Has been for years—long before those damned doctors destroyed my sight for me. (*Growls angrily, then sighs.*)

BESSIE

Perhaps Captain Hagberd is not so made as the town takes him for.

CARVIL (*grimly*)

Don't everybody know how he came here from the North to wait till his missing son turns up—here—of all places in the world! His boy that ran away to sea sixteen years ago and never did give a sign of

life since! Don't I remember seeing people dodge round corners out of his way when he came along High Street? Seeing him, I tell you. (*Groan*). He bothered everybody so with his silly talk of his son being sure to come back home—next year—next spring—next month—What is it by this time, hey?

BESSIE

Why talk about it? He bothers no one now.

CARVIL

No. They've grown too fly. You've got only to pass a remark on his sailcloth coat to make him shut up. All the town knows it. But he's got you to listen to his crazy talk whenever he chooses. Don't I hear you two at it, jabber, jabber, mumble, mumble—

BESSIE

What is there so mad in keeping up hope?

CARVIL (*with scathing scorn*)

Not mad! Starving himself to lay money by—for that son. Filling his house with furniture he won't let anyone see—for that son. Advertising in the papers every week, these sixteen years—for that son. Not mad! Boy, he calls him. Boy Harry. His boy Harry. His lost boy Harry. Yah! Let him lose his sight to know what real trouble means. And the boy—the man, I should say—must've been put away safe in Davy Jones's locker for many a year—drowned—food for fishes—dead. . . . Stands to reason, or he would have been here before, smelling around the old fool's money. (*Shakes BESSIE's arm slightly.*) Hey?

BESSIE

I don't know. Maybe.

CARVIL (*bursting out*)

Damme if I don't think he never had a son.

BESSIE

Poor man. Perhaps he never had.

CARVIL

Ain't that mad enough for you? But I suppose you think it sensible.

BESSIE

What does it matter? His talk keeps him up.

CARVIL

Aye! And it pleases you. Anything to get away from your poor blind father. . . . Jabber, jabber—mumble, mumble—till I begin to think you must be as crazy as he is. What do you find to talk about, you two? What's your game?

(During the scene CARVIL and BESSIE have crossed stage from left to right slowly with stoppages.)

BESSIE

It's warm. Will you sit out for a while?

CARVIL *(viciously)*

Yes, I will sit out. *(Insistent)* But what can be your game? What are you up to? *(They pass through the garden gate.)* Because if it's his money you are after—

BESSIE

Father! How can you?

CARVIL *(disregarding her)*

—to make you independent of your poor blind father, then you are a fool. *(Drops heavily on the seat.)* He's too much of a miser ever to make a will—even if he weren't mad.

BESSIE

Oh! It never entered my head. I swear it never did.

CARVIL

Never did. Hey! Then you are a still bigger fool. . . . I want to go to sleep! *(Takes off his hat, drops it on the ground, and leans his head back against the wall.)*

BESSIE

And I have been a good daughter to you. Won't you say that for me?

CARVIL *(very distinctly)*

I want—to—go—to—sleep. I'm tired. *(Closes his eyes.)*

(During that scene CAPTAIN HAGBERD has been seen hesitating at the back of the stage, then running quickly to the door of his cottage. He puts inside a tin kettle (from under his coat), and comes down to the railing between the two gardens stealthily.)

SCENE II

CARVIL seated. BESSIE. CAPTAIN HAGBERD *(white beard, sailcloth jacket)*

BESSIE (*knitting*)

You've been out this afternoon for quite a long time, haven't you?

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*eager*)

Yes, my dear. (*Slyly*) Of course you saw me come back.

BESSIE

Oh, yes. I did see you. You had something under your coat.

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*anxiously*)

It was only a kettle, my dear. A tin water kettle. I am glad I thought of it just in time. (*Winks, nods.*) When a husband gets back from his work he needs a lot of water for a wash. See? (*Dignified*) Not that Harry'll ever need to do a hand's turn after he comes home—(*Falters—casts stealthy glances on all sides*)—tomorrow.

BESSIE (*looking up, grave*)

Captain Hagberd, have you ever thought that perhaps your son will not—

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*paternally*)

I've thought of everything, my dear—of everything a reasonable young couple may need for housekeeping. Why, I can hardly turn about in my room up there, the house is that full. (*Rubs his hands with satisfaction.*) For my son Harry—when he comes home. One day more.

BESSIE (*flattering*)

Oh, you are a great one for bargains. (*CAPTAIN HAGBERD is delighted.*) But, Captain Hagberd—if—if—you don't know what may happen—if all that home you've got together were to be wasted—for nothing—after all. (*Aside*) Oh, I can't bring it out.

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*agitated; flings arms up, stamps feet; stuttering*)

What? What d'ye mean? What's-going to happen to the things?

BESSIE (*soothing*)

Nothing! Nothing—Dust—or moth—you know. Damp, perhaps. You never let anyone into the house—

CAPTAIN HAGBERD

Dust! Damp! (*Has a throaty, gurgling laugh.*) I light the fires and dust the things myself. (*Indignant*) Let anyone into the house, indeed! What would Harry say? (*Walks up and down his garden hastily with tosses, flings and jerks of his whole body.*)

BESSIE (*with authority*)

Now, then, Captain Hagberg! You know I won't put up with your tantrums. (*Shakes finger at him.*)

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*subdued, but still sulky, with his back to her*)

You want to see the things. That's what you're after. Well, no, not even you. Not till Harry has had his first look.

BESSIE

Oh, no! I don't. (*Relenting*) Not till you're willing. (*Smiles at CAPTAIN HAGBERD, who has turned half round already.*) You mustn't excite yourself. (*Knits.*)

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*condescending*)

And you the only sensible girl for miles and miles around. Can't you trust me? I am a domestic man. Always was, my dear. I hated the sea. People don't know what they let their boys into when they send them to sea. As soon make convicts of them at once. What sort of life is it? Most of your time you don't know what's going on at home. (*Insinuating*) There's nothing anywhere on earth as good as a home, my dear. (*Pause*) With a good husband. . . .

CARVIL (*heard from his seat fragmentarily*)

There they go—jabber, jabber—mumble, mumble. (*With a groaning effort*) Helpless! (*BESSIE has glanced round at him.*)

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*muttering*)

Extravagant ham and eggs fellow. (*Louder*) Of course it isn't as if he had a son to make a home ready for. Girls are different, my dear. They don't run away, my dear, my dear. (*Agitated*)

BESSIE (*dropping her arms wearily*)

No, Captain Hagberd—they don't.

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*slowly*)

I wouldn't let my own flesh and blood go to sea. Not I.

BESSIE

And the boy ran away.

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*a little vacantly*)

Yes, my only son Harry. (*Rouses himself.*) Coming home tomorrow.

BESSIE (*looks at him pityingly; speaks softly*)

Sometimes, Captain Hagberd, a hope turns out false.

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*uneasy*)

What's that got to do with Harry's coming back?

BESSIE

It's good to hope for something. But suppose now (*Feeling her way*) Yours is not the only lost son that's never—

CAPTAIN HAGBERD

Never what! You don't believe he's drowned. (*Crouches, glaring and grasping the rails.*)

BESSIE (*frightened, drops knitting*)

Captain Hagberd—don't. (*Catches hold of his shoulders over the railings.*) Don't—My God! He's going out of his mind! (*Cries*). I didn't mean it! I don't know.

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*backing away; with an affected burst of laughter*)

What nonsense! None of us Hagberds belonged to the sea. All farmers for hundreds of years. (*Paternal and cunning*) Don't alarm yourself, my dear. The sea can't get us. Look at me! I didn't get drowned. Moreover, Harry ain't a sailor at all. And if he isn't a sailor, he's bound to come back—tomorrow.

BESSIE (*has been facing him; murmurs*)

No. I give it up. He scares me. (*Aloud, sharply*) Then I would give up that advertising in the papers.

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*surprised and puzzled*)

Why, my dear? Everybody does it. His poor mother and I have been advertising for years and years. But she was an impatient woman. She died.

BESSIE

If your son's coming, as—as you say—what's the good of that expense? You had better spend that half-crown on yourself. I believe you don't eat enough.

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*confused*)

But it's the right thing to do. Look at the Sunday papers. Missing relatives on top page—all proper. (*Looks unhappy.*)

BESSIE (*startly*)

Ah, well! I declare I don't know what you live on.

CAPTAIN HAGBERD

Are you getting impatient, my dear? Don't get impatient—like my poor wife. If she'd only been patient she'd be here. Waiting—only one day more. (*Pleadingly*) Don't be impatient, my dear.

BESSIE

I've no patience with you sometimes.

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*with a flash of lucidity*)

Why? What's the matter? (*Sympathetic*) You're tired out, my dear, that's what it is.

BESSIE

Yes, I am. Day after day. (*Stands listless, arms hanging down.*)

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*timidly*)

House dull?

BESSIE (*apathetic*)

Yes.

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*as before*)

H'm. Wash, cook, scrub. Hey?

BESSIE (*as before*)

Yes.

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*pointing stealthily at the sleeping CARVIL*)

Heavy?

BESSIE (*in a dead voice*)

Like a millstone.

(*A silence.*)

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*with a burst of indignation*)

Why don't that extravagant fellow get you a servant?

BESSIE

I don't know.

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*cheerily*)

Wait till Harry comes home. He'll get you one.

BESSIE (*almost hysterical; laughs*)

Why, Captain Hagberd, perhaps your son won't even want to look at me—when he comes home.

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*in a great voice*)

What! (*Quite low*) The boy wouldn't dare—(*Rising choleric*)—wouldn't dare to refuse the only sensible girl for miles around. That stubborn jackanapes refuse to marry a girl like you! (*Walks about in a fury.*) You trust me, my dear, my dear, my dear. I'll make him. I'll—I'll—(*Splutters*)—cut him off with a shilling.

BESSIE

Hush! (*Severe*) You mustn't talk like that. What's this? More of your tantrums?

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*quite humble*)

No, no—this isn't my tantrums—when I don't feel quite well in my head. Only, I can't stand this. . . . I've grown as fond of you as if you'd been the wife of my Harry already. And to be told—(*Can't restrain himself; shouts*) Jackanapes!

BESSIE

Sh-h. Don't you worry! (*Wearily*) I must give that up, too, I suppose. (*Aloud*) I didn't mean it, Captain Hagberd.

CAPTAIN HAGBERD

It's as if I were to have two children tomorrow. My son Harry—and the only sensible girl—Why, my dear, I couldn't get on without you. We two are reasonable together. The rest of the people in this town are crazy. The way they stare at you. And the grins—they're all on the grin. It makes me dislike to go out. (*Bewildered*) It seems as if there was something wrong about—somewhere. My dear, is there anything wrong—you who are sensible . . .

BESSIE (*soothingly tender*)

No, no, Captain Hagberd. There is nothing wrong about you anywhere.

CARVIL (*lying back*)

Bessie! (*Sits up.*) Get my hat, Bessie. . . . Bessie, my hat. . . . Bessie. . . . Bessie. . . .

(*At the first sound BESSIE picks up and puts away her knitting. She walks toward him, picks up the hat and puts it on his head.*)

Bessie, my . . . (*Hat on head; shouting stops.*)

BESSIE (*quietly*)

Will you go in, now?

CARVIL

Help me up. Steady. I'm dizzy. It's the thundery weather. An autumn thunderstorm means a bad gale. Very fierce—and sudden. There will be shipwrecks tonight on our coast.

(Exit BESSIE and CARVIL through door of their cottage. It has fallen dusk.)

CAPTAIN HAGBERD *(picking up the spade)*

Extravagant fellow! And all this town is mad—perfectly mad. I found them out years ago. Thank God they don't come this way staring and grinning. I can't bear them. I'll never go again into that High Street. *(Agitated)* Never, never, never. Won't need to after tomorrow. Never! *(Flings down the spade in a passion.)*

(While HAGBERD speaks, the bow window of the CARVILS' is lit up, and BESSIE is seen settling her father in a big armchair. She pulls down the blind. Enter LAMPLIGHTER. CAPTAIN HAGBERD picks up the spade and leans forward on it with both hands; very still, watching him light the lamp.)

LAMPLIGHTER *(jocular)*

There! You will be able to dig by lamplight if the fancy takes you.

(Exit LAMPLIGHTER to back.)

CAPTAIN HAGBERD *(disgusted)*

Ough! The people here . . . *(Shudders.)*

LAMPLIGHTER'S VOICE *(heard loudly beyond the cottages)*

Yes, that's the way.

(Enter HARRY from back.)

SCENE III

CAPTAIN HAGBERD. HARRY. Later BESSIE

HARRY HAGBERD *(thirty-one, tall, broad shoulders, shaven face, small mustache. Blue serge suit. Coat open. Gray flannel shirt without collar and tie. No waistcoat. Belt with buckle. Black, soft felt hat, wide-brimmed, worn crushed in the crown and a little on one side. Good nature, recklessness, some swagger in the bearing. Assured, deliberate walk with a heavy tread. Slight roll in the gait. Walks down. Stops, hands in pockets. Looks about. Speaks).* This must be it. Can't see anything beyond. There's somebody. *(Walks up to CAPTAIN HAGBERD's gate.)* Can you tell me . . . *(Manner changes. Leans elbow on gate.)* Why, you must be Captain Hagberd himself.

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*in the garden, both hands on the spade, peering, startled*)
Yes, I am.

HARRY (*slowly*)

You've been advertising in the papers for your son, I believe.

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*off his guard, nervous*)

Yes. My only boy Harry. He's coming home tomorrow. (*Mumbles*)
For a permanent stay.

HARRY (*surprised*)

The devil he is! (*Change of tone.*) My word! You've grown a beard
like Father Christmas himself.

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*impressively*)

Go your way. (*Waves one hand loftily.*) What's that to you? Go your
way. (*Agitated*) Go your way.

HARRY

There, there. I am not trespassing in the street—where I stand—am
I? Tell you what, I fancy there's something wrong about your news.
Suppose you let me come in—for a quiet chat, you know.

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*horrified*)

Let you—you come in!

HARRY (*persuasive*)

Because I could give you some real information about your son.
The—very—latest—tip. If you care to hear.

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*exploding*)

No! I don't care to hear. (*Begins to pace to and fro, spade on shoulder.
Gesticulating with his other arm.*) Here's a fellow—a grinning town
fellow, who says there's something wrong. (*Fiercely*) I have got more
information than you're aware of. I have all the information I want.
I have had it for years—for years—for years—enough to last me till
tomorrow! Let you come in, indeed! What would Harry say?

(*BESSIE CARVIL enters at the door with a white wrap on her head and stands
in her garden trying to see.*)

BESSIE

What's the matter?

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*beside himself*)

An information fellow. (*Stumbles.*)

HARRY (*putting out an arm to steady him, gravely*)

Here! Steady a bit! Seems to me somebody's been trying to get at you. (*Change of tone.*) Hullo! What's this rig you've got on? . . . Storm canvas coat, by George! (*He gives a big, throaty laugh.*) Well! You are a character!

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*daunted by the allusion, looks at coat*)

I—I wear it for—for the time being. Till—till—tomorrow. (*Shrinks away, spade in hand, to the door of his cottage.*)

BESSIE (*advancing*)

And what may you want, sir?

HARRY (*turning to BESSIE at once; easy manner*)

I'd like to know about this swindle that's going to be sprung on him. I didn't mean to startle the old man. You see, on my way here I dropped into a barber's to get a twopenny shave, and they told me there that he was something of a character. He has been a character all his life.

BESSIE (*very low, wondering*)

What swindle?

CAPTAIN HAGBERD

A grinning fellow! (*Makes a sudden dash indoors with the spade. Door slams. Lock clicks. Affected gurgling laugh within.*)

SCENE IV

BESSIE and HARRY. Later CAPTAIN HAGBERD from window

HARRY (*after a short silence*)

What on earth's upset him so? What's the meaning of all this fuss? He isn't always like that, is he?

BESSIE

I don't know who you are; but I may tell you that his mind has been troubled for years about an only son who ran away from home—a long time ago. Everybody knows that here.

HARRY (*thoughtful*)

Troubled—for years! (*Suddenly*) Well, I am the son.

BESSIE (*stepping back*)

You! . . . Harry!

HARRY (*amused, dry tone*)

Got hold of my name, eh? Been making friends with the old man?

BESSIE (*distressed*)

Yes . . . I . . . sometimes . . . (*Rapidly*) He's our landlord.

HARRY (*scornfully*)

Owens both them rabbit hutches, does he? Just a thing he'd be proud of. . . . (*Earnest*) And now you had better tell me all about that chap who's coming tomorrow. Know anything of him? I reckon there's more than one in that little game. Come! Out with it. (*Chaffing*) I don't take no—from women.

BESSIE (*bewildered*)

Oh! It's so difficult. . . . What had I better do? . . .

HARRY (*good-humored*)

Make a clean breast of it.

BESSIE (*wildly to herself*)

Impossible! (*Starts.*) You don't understand. I must think—see—try to—I—I must have time. Plenty of time.

HARRY

What for? Come. Two words. And don't be afraid for yourself. I ain't going to make it a police job. But it's the other fellow that'll get upset when he least expects it. There'll be some fun when he shows his mug here tomorrow. (*Snaps his fingers.*) I don't care that for the old man's dollars, but right is right. You shall see me put a head on that coon, whoever he is.

BESSIE (*wringing her hands slightly*)

What had I better do? (*Suddenly to HARRY*) It's you—you yourself that we—that he's waiting for. It's *you* who are to come tomorrow.

HARRY (*slowly*)

Oh! it's me! (*Perplexed*) There's something there I can't understand. I haven't written ahead or anything. It was my chum who showed me the advertisement with the old boy's address, this very morning—in London.

BESSIE (*anxious*)

How can I make it plain to you without . . . (*Bites her lip, embarrassed.*) Sometimes he talks so strangely.

ONE DAY MORE

HARRY (*expectant*)

Does he? What about?

BESSIE

Only you. And he will stand no contradicting.

HARRY

Stubborn. Eh? The old man hasn't changed much from what I can remember. (*They stand looking at each other helplessly.*)

BESSIE

He's made up his mind you would come back—tomorrow.

HARRY

I can't hang about here till morning. Got no money to get a bed. Not a cent. But why won't today do?

BESSIE

Because you've been too long away.

HARRY (*with force*)

Look here, they fairly drove me out. Poor mother nagged at me for being idle, and the old man said he would cut my soul out of my body rather than let me go to sea.

BESSIE (*murmuring*)

He can bear no contradicting.

HARRY (*continuing*)Well, it looked as though he would do it, too. So I went. (*Moody*) It seems to me sometimes I was born to them by mistake—in that other rabbit hutch of a house.BESSIE (*a little mocking*)

And where do you think you ought to have been born by rights?

HARRY

In the open—upon a beach—on a windy night.

BESSIE (*faintly*)

Ah!

HARRY

They were characters, both of them, by George! Shall I try the door?

BESSIE

Wait. I must explain to you why it is tomorrow.

HARRY

Aye. That you must, or—

(*A window in HAGBERD's cottage runs up.*)

CAPTAIN HAGBERD'S VOICE (*above*)

A—grinning—information—fellow coming to worry me in my own garden! What next?

(*The window rumbles down.*)

BESSIE

Yes. I must. (*Lays a hand on HARRY's sleeve.*) Let's get further off. Nobody ever comes this way after dark.

HARRY (*with a careless laugh*)

Aye. A good road for a walk with a girl.

(*They turn their backs on the audience and move up the stage slowly, close together. HARRY bends his head over BESSIE.*)

BESSIE'S VOICE (*beginning eagerly*)

People here somehow did not take kindly to him.

HARRY'S VOICE

Aye. Aye. I understand that. (*They walk slowly back toward the front.*)

BESSIE

He was almost ready to starve himself for your sake.

HARRY

And I had to starve more than once for his whim.

BESSIE

I'm afraid you've a hard heart. (*Remains thoughtful.*)

HARRY

What for? For running away? (*Indignant*) Why, he wanted to make a blamed lawyer's clerk of me.

(*From here this scene goes on mainly near and about the street lamp.*)

BESSIE (*rousing herself*)

What are you? A sailor?

Anything you like. (*Proudly*) Sailor enough to be worth my salt on board any craft that swims the seas.

BESSIE

He will never, never believe it He mustn't be contradicted

HARRY

Always liked to have his own way And you've been encouraging him

BESSIE (*earnestly*)

No—not in everything—not really!

HARRY (*with a vexed laugh*)

What about that pretty tomorrow notion? I've a hungry chum in London—waiting for me

BESSIE (*defending herself*)

Why should I make the poor old friendless man miserable? I thought you were far away I thought you were dead I didn't know but you had never been born I—I—(HARRY *turns to her She speaks desperately*) It was easier to believe it myself (*Carried away*) And, after all, it's true It's come to pass This is the tomorrow we've been waiting for

HARRY (*half perfunctorily*)

Aye Anybody can see that your heart is as soft as your voice

BESSIE (*as if unable to keep back the words*)

I didn't think you would have noticed my voice

HARRY (*already inattentive*)

H'm Dashed scrape This is a queer tomorrow, without any sort of today, as far as I can see (*Resolutely*) I must try the door

BESSIE

Well—try, then

HARRY (*from the gate looking over his shoulder at BESSIE*)

He ain't likely to fly out at me, is he? I would be afraid of laying my hands on him The chaps are always telling me I don't know my own strength

BESSIE (*in front*)

He's the most harmless creature that ever—

HARRY

You wouldn't say so if you had seen him walloping me with a hard leather strap (*Walking up the garden*) I haven't forgotten it in sixteen

long years. (*Rat-tat-tat twice.*) Hallo, dad. (*BESSIE intensely expectant. Rat-tat-tat.*) Hullo, dad—let me in. I am your own Harry. Straight. Your son Harry come back home—a day too soon.

(*The window above rumbles up.*)

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*leaning out, aiming with the spade*)

Aha!

BESSIE (*warningly*)

Look out, Harry! (*The spade falls.*) Are you hurt? (*The window rumbles down.*)

HARRY (*in the distance*)

Only grazed my hat.

BESSIE

Thank God! (*intensely*) What'll he do now?

HARRY (*coming forward, slamming the gate behind him*)

Just like old times. Nearly licked the life out of me for wanting to go away; and now I come back, he shies a confounded old shovel at my head. (*Fumes. Laughs a little.*) I wouldn't care, only poor little Ginger—Ginger's my chum up in London—he will starve while I walk back all the way from here. (*Faces BESSIE blankly.*) I spent my last twopence on a shave. Out of respect for the old man.

BESSIE

I think, if you let me, I could manage to talk him round in a week, maybe.

(*A muffled periodical bellowing had been heard faintly for some time.*)

HARRY (*on the alert*)

What's this? Who's making this row? Hark! Bessie, Bessie—it's in your house, I believe.

BESSIE (*without stirring, dreadingly*)

It's for me.

HARRY (*discreetly, whispering*)

Good voice for a ship's deck in a squall. Your husband? (*Steps out of lamplight.*)

BESSIE

No. My father. He's blind. (*Pause*) I'm not married.
(*The bellowings grow louder.*)

ONE DAY MORE

HARRY

Oh, I say. What's up? Who's murdering him?

BESSIE (*calmly*)

I expect he's finished his tea. (*The bellowing continues regularly.*)

HARRY

Hadn't you better see to it? You'll have the whole town coming out here presently. (*BESSIE moves off.*) I say! (*BESSIE stops.*) Couldn't you scare up some bread and butter for me from that tea? I'm hungry. Had no breakfast.

BESSIE (*starts off at the word "hungry," dropping to the ground the white woollen shawl*)

I won't be a minute. Don't go away.

HARRY (*alone; picks up the shawl absently, and, looking at it spread out in his hands, pronounces slowly*)

A—dam'—silly—scrape. (*Pause. Throws the shawl on his arm. Strolls up and down. Mutters.*) No money 'to get back. (*Louder*) Silly little Ginger'll think I've got hold of the pieces and given an old shipmate the go-by. One good shove—(*Makes motion of bursting in door with his shoulders*)—would burst that door in—I bet. (*Looks about.*) I wonder where the nearest bobby is? No. They would want to bundle me neck and crop into chokey. (*Shudders.*) Perhaps. It makes me dog sick to think of being locked up. Haven't got the nerve. Not for prison. (*Leans against lamppost.*) And not a cent for my fare. I wonder if that girl now—

BESSIE (*coming hastily forward, a plate with bread and meat in her hand*)

I didn't take time to get anything else.

HARRY (*beginning to eat*)

You're not standing treat to a beggar. My dad is a rich man—you know.

BESSIE (*plate in hand*)

You resemble your father.

HARRY

I was the very image of him in face from a boy—(*Eats*)—and that's about as far as it goes. He was always one of your domestic characters. He looked sick when he had to go to sea for a fortnight's trip. (*Laughs*) He was all for house and home.

BESSIE

And you? Have you never wished for a home? (*She goes off with the empty plate and puts it down hastily on CARVIL'S bench—out of sight*)

HARRY (*left in front*)

Home! If I found myself shut up in what the old man calls a home, I would kick it down about my ears on the third day—or else go to bed and die before the week was out Die in a house—ough!

BESSIE (*returning; stops and speaks from the garden railing*)

And where is it that you would wish to die?

HARRY

In the bush, in the sea, on some blamed mountain top for choice No such luck, though, I suppose

BESSIE (*from a distance*)

Would that be luck?

HARRY

Yes! For them that make the whole world their home

BESSIE (*coming forward shyly*)

The world's a cold home—they say

HARRY (*a little gloomy*)

So it is When a man's done for

BESSIE

You see! (*Taunting*) And a ship's not so very big, after all

HARRY

No But the sea is great And then what of the ship? You love her and leave her, Miss—Bessie's your name—isn't it? I like that name

BESSIE

You like my name! I wonder you remembered it That's why, I suppose

HARRY (*a slight swagger in his voice*)

What's the odds! As long as a fellow has lived And a voyage isn't a marriage—as we sailors say

ONE DAY MORE

BESSIE

So you're not married—(*Movement of HARRY*)—to any ship!

HARRY (*with a soft laugh*)

Ship! I've loved and left more of them than I can remember. I've been nearly everything you can think of but a tinker or a soldier; I've been a boundary rider; I've sheared sheep and humped my swag and harpooned a whale; I've rigged ships and skinned dead bullocks and prospected for gold—and turned my back on more money than the old man would have scraped together in his whole life.

BESSIE (*thoughtfully*)

I could talk him over in a week. . . .

HARRY (*negligently*)

I dare say you could. (*Joking*) I don't know but what I could make shift to wait if you only promise to talk to me now and then. I've grown quite fond of your voice. I like a right woman's voice.

BESSIE (*with averted head*)

Quite fond. (*Sharply*) Talk! Nonsense! Much you'd care. (*Business-like*) Of course I would have to sometimes. . . . (*Thoughtful again*) Yes. In a week—if—if only I knew you would try to get on with him afterward.

HARRY (*leaning against the lamppost; growls through his teeth*)

More humoring. Ah! Well, no! (*Hums significantly*)

Oh, oh, oh, Rio, . . .

And fare thee well

My bonnie young girl,

We're bound for Rio Grande.

BESSIE (*shivering*)

What's this?

HARRY

Why! The chorus of an up-anchor tune. Kiss and go. A deep water ship's good-bye. . . . You are cold. Here's that thing of yours I've picked up and forgot there on my arm. Turn round a bit. So. (*Wraps her up—commanding.*) Hold the ends together in front.

BESSIE (*softly*)

A week is not so very long.

HARRY (*violently*)

You think that I—(*Stops with a side-long, look at her.*) I can't dodge about in ditches and live on air and water. Can I? I haven't any money—you know.

BESSIE

He's been scraping and saving up for years. All he has is for you, and perhaps. . . .

HARRY (*interrupting*)

Yes. If I come to sit on it like a blamed toad in a hole. Thank you.

BESSIE (*angrily*)

What did you come for, then?

HARRY (*promptly*)

For five quid—(*Pause*)—after a jolly good spree.

BESSIE (*scathingly*)

You and that—that—chum of yours have been drinking.

HARRY (*laughing*)

Don't fly out, Miss Bessie—dear. Ginger's not a bad little chap. Can't take care of himself, though. Blind three days. (*Serious*) Don't think I am given that way. Nothing and nobody can get over me unless I like. I can be as steady as a rock.

BESSIE (*murmuring*)

Oh! I don't think you are bad.

HARRY (*approvingly*)

You're right there. (*Impulsive*) Ask the girls all over—(*Checks himself*) Ginger, he's long-headed, too, in his way—mind you. He sees the paper this morning, and says he to me: "Hallo! Look at that, Harry—loving parent—that's five quid sure." So we scraped all our pockets for the fare. . . .

BESSIE (*unbelieving*)

You came here for that?

ONE DAY MORE

HARRY (*surprised*)

What else would I want here? Five quid isn't much to ask for—once in sixteen years. (*Through his teeth with a sidelong look at her*) And now I am ready to go—for my fare.

BESSIE (*clapping her hands*)

Who ever heard a man talk like this before? I can't believe you mean it.

HARRY

What? That I would go? You just try and see.

BESSIE (*disregarding him*)

Don't you care for anyone? Didn't you ever want anyone in the world to care for you?

HARRY

In the world! (*Boastful*) There's hardly a place you can go in the world where you wouldn't find somebody that did care for Harry Hagberd. (*Pause*) I'm not of the sort that go about skulking under false names.

BESSIE

Somebody—that means a woman.

HARRY

Well! And if it did?

BESSIE (*unsteadily*)

Oh, I see how it is. You get round them with your soft speeches, your promises, and then . . .

HARRY (*violently*)

Never!

BESSIE (*startled, steps back*)

Ah—you never . . .

HARRY (*calm*)

Never yet told a lie to a woman.

BESSIE

What lie?

HARRY

Why, the lie that comes glib to a man's tongue. None of that for me. I leave the sneaking off to them soft-spoken chaps you're thinking of. No! If you love me you take me. And if you take me—why, then, the capstan song of deep water ships is sure to settle it all some fine day.

BESSIE (*after a short pause, with an effort*)

It's like your ships, then.

HARRY (*amused*)

Exactly, up to now. Or else I wouldn't be here in a silly fix.

BESSIE (*with assumed indifference*)

Perhaps it's because you've never yet met—(*Her voice fails.*)

HARRY (*negligently*)

Maybe. And perhaps never shall. . . . What's the odds? It's the looking for a thing. . . . No matter. I love them all—ships and women. The scrapes they got me into, and the scrapes they got me out of—my word! I say, Miss Bessie, what are you thinking of?

BESSIE (*lifting her head*)

That you are supposed never to tell a lie.

HARRY

Never, eh? You wouldn't be that hard on a chap.

BESSIE (*recklessly*)

Never to a woman, I mean.

HARRY

Well, no. (*Serious*) Never anything that matters. (*Aside*) I don't seem to get any nearer to my railway fare. (*Leans wearily against the lamp-post with far-off look. Bessie at the left, looks at him.*)

BESSIE

Now what are *you* thinking of?

HARRY (*turning his head, staring at her*)

Well, I was thinking what a fine figure of a girl you are.

BESSIE (*looking away a moment*)

Is that true, or is it only one of them that don't matter?

ONE DAY MORE

HARRY (*laughing a little*)

No! No! That's true. Haven't you ever been told that before? The men. . . .

BESSIE

I hardly speak to a soul from year's end to year's end. Father's blind. He don't like strangers, and he can't bear to think of me out of his call. Nobody comes near us much.

HARRY (*absent-minded*)

Blind—ah! Of course.

BESSIE

For years and years . . .

HARRY (*commiserating*)

For years and years. In one of them hutches. You are a good daughter. (*Brightening up*) A fine girl altogether. You seem the sort that makes a good chum to a man in a fix. And there's not a man in this whole town who found you out? I can hardly credit it, Miss Bessie. (*BESSIE shakes her head.*) Man I said! (*Consemtuous*) A lot of tame rabbits in hutches I call them. . . . (*Breaks off*) I say, when's the last train up to London? Can you tell me?

BESSIE (*gazing at him steadily*)

What for? You've no money.

HARRY

That's just it. (*Leans back against post again.*) Hard luck. (*Insinuating*) But there was never a time in all my travels that a woman of the right sort did not turn up to help me out of a fix. I don't know why. It's perhaps because they know without telling that I love them all. (*Playful*) I've almost fallen in love with you, Miss Bessie.

BESSIE (*with an unsteady laugh*)

Why! How you talk! You haven't even seen my face properly. (*One step toward HARRY as if compelled.*)

HARRY (*bending forward gallantly*)

A little pale. It suits some. (*Puts out his hand, catches hold of her arm. Draws her to him.*) Let's see. . . . Yes, it suits you. (*It's a moment before BESSIE puts up her hands, palms out, and turns away her head.*)

BESSIE (*whispering*)

Don't. (*Struggles a little. Released, stands averted.*)

HARRY

No offense. (*Stands, back to audience, looking at HAGBERD's cottage.*)

BESSIE (*alone in front; faces audience; whispers*)

My voice—my figure—my heart—my face. . . .

(*A silence. BESSIE's face gradually lights up. Directly HARRY speaks, expression of hopeful attention.*)

HARRY (*from the railing*)

The old man seems to have gone to sleep waiting for that tomorrow of his.

BESSIE

Come away. He sleeps very little.

HARRY (*strolling down*)

He has taken an everlasted jamming hitch round the whole business. (*Vexed*) Cast it loose who may. (*Contemptuous exclamation*) Tomorrow. Pooh! It'll be just another mad today.

BESSIE

It's the brooding over his hope that's done it. People teased him so. It's his fondness for you that's troubled his mind.

HARRY

Aye. A confounded shovel on the head. The old man had always a queer way of showing his fondness for me.

BESSIE

A hopeful, troubled, expecting old man—left alone—all alone.

HARRY (*in a lower tone*)

Did he ever tell you what mother died of?

BESSIE

Yes. (*A little bitter*) From impatience.

HARRY (*making a gesture with his arm; speaks vaguely but with feeling*)

I believe you have been very good to my old man. . . .

BESSIE (*tentative*)

Wouldn't you try to be a son to him?

HARRY (*angrily*)

No contradicting; is that it? You seem to know my dad pretty well. And so do I. He's dead nuts on having his own way—and I've been used to have my own too long. It's the deuce of a fix.

BESSIE

How could it hurt you not to contradict him for a while—and perhaps in time you would get used . . .

HARRY (*interrupting sulkily*)

I ain't accustomed to knuckle under. There's a pair of us. Hagberds both. I ought to be thinking of my train.

BESSIE (*earnestly*)

Why? There's no need. Let us get away up the road a little.

HARRY (*through his teeth*)

And no money for the fare. (Looks up.) Sky's come overcast. Black, too. It'll be a wild, windy night—to walk the highroad on. But I and wild nights are old friends wherever the free wind blows.

BESSIE (*entreating*)

No need. No need. (*Looks apprehensively at HAGBERD's cottage. Takes a couple of steps up as if to draw HARRY further off. HARRY follows. Both stop.*)

HARRY (*after waiting*)

What about this tomorrow whim?

BESSIE

Leave that to me. Of course all his fancies are not mad. They aren't. (*Pause*) Most people in this town would think what he had set his mind on quite sensible. If he ever talks to you of it, don't contradict him. It would—it would be dangerous.

HARRY (*surprised*)

What would he do?

BESSIE

He would—I don't know—something rash.

HARRY (*startled*)

To himself?

BESSIE

No. It'd be against you—I fear.

HARRY (*sullen*)

Let him.

BESSIE

Never. Don't quarrel. But perhaps he won't even try to talk to you of it. (*Thinking aloud*) Who knows what I can do with him in a week? I can, I can, I can—I must.

HARRY

Come—what's this sensible notion of his that I mustn't quarrel about?

BESSIE (*turning to HARRY, calm, forcible*)

If I make him once see that you've come back, he will be as sane as you or I. All his mad notions will be gone. But that other is quite sensible. And you mustn't quarrel over it.

(*She moves up to the back of the stage. HARRY follows a little behind, away from the audience.*)

HARRY'S VOICE (*calm*)

Let's hear what it is.

(*The voices cease. Action visible as before. HARRY steps back and walks hastily down. BESSIE, at his elbow, follows with her hands clasped.*)

(*Loud burst of voice.*)

HARRY (*raving to and fro*)

No! Expects me—a home. Who wants his home? . . . What I want is hard work, or an all-fired racket, or more room than there is in the whole of England. Expects me! A man like me—for his rotten money—there ain't enough money in the world to turn me into a blamed tame rabbit in a hutch. (*He stops suddenly before BESSIE, his arms crossed on his breast. Violently*) Don't you see it?

BESSIE (*terrified, stammering faintly*)

Yes. Yes. Don't look at me like this. (*Sudden scream*) Don't quarrel with him. He's mad!

HARRY (*in headlong utterance*)

Mad! Not he. He likes his own way. Tie me up by the neck here. Here! Ha! Ha! Ha! (*Louder*) And the whole world is not a bit too big

for me to spread my elbows in, I can tell you—what's your name—Bessie. (*Rising scorn*) Marry! Wants me to marry and settle. . . . (*Scathingly*) And as likely as not he has looked out the girl, too—dash my soul. Talked to you about it—did he? And do you happen to know the Judy—may I ask?

(*A window in HAGBERD's cottage runs up. They start and stand still*)

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*above, beginning slowly*)

A grinning information fellow from a crazy town. (*His voice changes*) Bessie, I see you. . . .

BESSIE (*shrill*)

Captain Hagberd! Say nothing, You don't understand. For heaven's sake don't.

CAPTAIN HAGBERD

Send him away this minute, or I will tell Harry. They know nothing of Harry in this crazy town. Harry's coming home tomorrow. Do you hear? One day more!

(*Silence.*)

HARRY (*muttering*)

Well!—he *is* a character.

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*chuckling softly*)

Never you fear! The boy shall marry you. (*Sudden anger*) He'll have to. I'll make him. Or, if not—(*Furious*)—I'll cut him off with a shilling, and leave everything to you. Jackanapes! Let him starve!

(*The window rumbles down*)

HARRY (*slowly*)

So it's you—the girl. It's you! Now I begin to see. . . . By heavens, you have a heart as soft as your woman's voice.

BESSIE (*half averted, her face in her hands*)

You see! Don't come near me.

HARRY (*making a step toward her*)

I must have another look at your pale face.

BESSIE (*turning unexpectedly and pushing him with both hands; HARRY staggers back and stands still; BESSIE, fiercely*)

Go away.

HARRY (*watching her*)

Directly, but women always had to get me out of my scrapes. I am a beggar now, and you must help me out of my scrape.

BESSIE (*who at the word "beggar" had begun fumbling in the pocket of her dress, speaks wildly*)

Here it is. Take it. Don't look at me. Don't speak to me!

HARRY (*swaggering up under the lamp looking at the coin in his palm*)

Half a quid. . . . My fare!

BESSIE (*hands clenched*)

Why are you still here?

HARRY

Well, you *are* a fine figure of a girl. My word. I've a good mind to stop—for a week.

BESSIE (*with pain and shame*)

Oh! . . . What are you waiting for? If I had more money I would give it all, all. I would give everything I have to make you go—to make you forget you had ever heard my voice and seen my face. (*Covers her face with her hands.*)

HARRY (*sombre, watches her*)

No fear! I haven't forgotten a single one of you in the world. Some've given me more than money. No matter. You can't buy me in—and you can't buy yourself out. . . .

(*He strides toward her. Seizes her arms. A short struggle. BESSIE gives way. Her hair falls loose. HARRY kisses her forehead, cheeks, lips, then releases her. BESSIE staggers against the railing.*)

(*Exit HARRY; measured walk without haste.*)

BESSIE (*staring eyes, hair loose, back against the railing; calls out*)

Harry! (*Gathers up her skirts and runs a little way*) Come back, Harry. (*Staggers forward against the lamppost*) Harry! (*Much lower*) Harry! (*In a whisper*) Take me with you. (*Begins to laugh, at first faintly, then louder.*)

(*The window rumbles up, and CAPTAIN HAGBERD's chuckle mingles with BESSIE's laughter, which abruptly stops.*)

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*chuckling; speaking cautiously*)

Is he gone yet, that information fellow? Do you see him anywhere, my dear?

BESSIE (*low and stammering*)

N-no, no! (*Totters away from the lamppost*) I don't see him.

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*anxious*)

A grinning vagabond, my dear. Good girl. It's you who drove him away. Good girl.

(*The stage gradually darkens.*)

BESSIE

Go in; be quiet! You have done harm enough.

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*alarmed*)

Why? Do you hear him yet, my dear?

BESSIE (*sobbing drooping against the railings*)

No! No! I don't. I don't hear him any more.

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*triumphant*)

Now we shall be all right, my dear, till our Harry comes home to-morrow. (*Affected gurgling laugh.*)

BESSIE (*distracted*)

Be quiet. Shut yourself in. You will make me mad. (*Losing control of herself, repeats with rising inflexion*) You make me mad. (*With despair*) There is no tomorrow! (*Sinks to the ground near the middle railings. Low sobs.*)

(*The stage darkens perceptibly.*)

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*above, in a voice suddenly dismayed and shrill*)

What! What do you say, my dear? No tomorrow? (*Broken, very feebly*) No—tomorrow? (*The window runs down.*)

CARVIL (*heard within, muffled bellowing*)

Bessie—Bessie—Bessie—Bessie—(*At the first call BESSIE springs up and begins to stumble blindly toward the door. A faint flash of lightning, followed by a very low rumble of thunder.*) You—Bessie!

CURTAIN.

KISSES IN THE TRAIN

by D. H. Lawrence

I saw the midlands
Revolve through her hair;
The fields of autumn
Stretching bare,
And sheep on the pasture
Tossed back in a scare.

And still as ever
The world went round,
My mouth on her pulsing
Neck was found,
And my breast to her beating
Breast was bound.

But my heart at the center
Of all, in a swoond,
Was still as a pivot,
As all the ground
On its prowling orbit
Shifted round.

And still in my nostrils
The scent of her flesh,
And still my wet mouth
Sought her afresh;
And still one pulse
Through the world did thresh.

And the world all whirling
Around in joy
Like the dance of a dervish
Did destroy
My sense—and my reason
Spun like a toy.

FIFTY YEARS SPENT

But firm at the center
My heart was found;
Her own to my perfect
Heartbeat bound,
Like a magnet's keeper
Closing the round.

FIFTY YEARS SPENT

by Maxwell Struthers Burt

Fifty years spent before I found me,
Wind on my mouth and the taste of rain,
Where the great hills circled and swept around me
And the torrents leapt to the mist-drenched plain;
Ah, it was long this coming of me,
Back to the hills and the sounding sea.

Ye who can go when so it tideth
To fallow fields when the Spring is new,
Finding a spirit that there abideth,
Taking fill of the sun and the dew,
Little ye know of the cross of the town
And the small pale folk who go up and down.

Fifty years spent before I found me
A bank knee deep with climbing rose,
Saw, or had space to look around me,
Knew how the apple buds and blows;
And all the while that I thought me wise
I walked as one with blinded eyes.

Scarcely a lad who passes twenty
But finds him a girl to balm his heart;
Only I, who had work so plenty,
Bade this loving keep apart:
Once I saw a girl in a crowd,
But I hushed my heart when it cried out loud.

City courts in January,
City courts in wilted June,
Often ye will catch and carry
Echoes of some straying tune:
Ah, but underneath the feet
Echoes stifle in a street.

Fifty years spent, and what do they bring me?
Now I can buy the meadow and hill:
Where is the heart of the boy to sing thee?
Where is the life for thy living to fill?
And thirty years back in a city crowd
I passed a girl when my heart cried loud!

AUTUMN IN THE SUBWAY

*by J. Thorne Smith, Jr.**

I watched her eyes, for they were fixed afar
Where sky and crag and flaring sunset meet,
And there before me in the fetid car
A river glided and the woods smelled sweet
And wind swam in the trees. The night came on
And through the singing dusk I saw her face
In Autumn foliage framed. Then she was gone.
A dark-eyed woman sank into her place.
Her heavy perfume drifting up to me
Swept out the night wind through the sobbing trees,
A shadow crossed the woods and stealthily,
There came to swift caress of silken knees.
Then beauty died. I sought another strap
And thought of one with red leaves in her lap.

* The late Thorne Smith thus first signed his writings. He later became famous as the author of the riotous humorous fantasies, *The Stray Lamb*, *The Night Life of the Gods* and *The Bishop's Jaegers*.

THE STORY ASHLAND TOLD AT DINNER

*by Ludwig Lewisohn**

NO, the Ashlands haven't entertained formally for years. And they've given up their lodge at Dobbs' Ferry. I saw it the other day; it looked like a blind, deserted thing. They stick to their old house downtown—five stories, you know, stone-front, dwarfed all around by skyscrapers.

Every now and then I see them in a casual way. She's taken to powdering her hair; you know how easily those brilliant dark women turn grey. But she's still the same—like a japonica in moonlight, I used to say, shining among the dark leaves. He's the same, too—good-looking, golf-playing lawyer, apparently quite impassive and without much subtlety. But that's a mistaken impression produced by his wife's attitude to him. . . .

I can prove that by telling you about a certain dinner—the last they gave at Dobbs' Ferry. You've heard foolish stories, the lurid kind people tell. I happen to have been there. . . .

It was late October and when I think of that afternoon and evening it seems to me that nature's gone off in looks like the rest of us. Leaves! They were bronze and scarlet and gold and a foot deep and in the immense silence you heard nothing but the wind rustling in them. The river curves there and looks like a lake—deep and still and solemn—olive, it seems to me, with bronze flecks and golden pools at sunset. The dining room was in old mahogany (they've left all that fine stuff to moulder out there, too) with the candle flames making amber splatches in it and festoons of Autumn foliage all around.

There were just eight of us, including Bill and Margaret Ashland, and we could all see the river and the still trees through the French windows. It wasn't too cool, but the air had a fine, stringent tang. Everybody felt braced and a little exhilarated, don't you know.

The talk was good at the start. Only there were queer little halts in it—sudden general pauses. And I can tell you why:

We all wanted to ask Ashland, who had been Frye's college chum

* While granting us permission to reprint this, Mr. Lewisohn requests us to take pains to emphasize his own distaste for it as an example of a period of style and point of view which he has since outgrown.

and later his lawyer and had wound up the estate, why the deuce Tom Frye had put a bullet through his fool head.

There wasn't anybody there who hadn't been glad of the invitation in the hope of light on that subject. It was amusing to see how everybody edged up to the question and then edged away again till finally Stimson—who had also been at college with Frye and Ashland—Stimson, fat, blond, rosy and blatant as ever—called out to Ashland:

"Look here, Bill, you knew all about Tom Frye; he'd hardly talked to *me*; why don't you tell us something?"

I was sitting next to Margaret and she said, "Oh," in a quick, deprecatory sort of way. I nodded my agreement with her. It was coarse and I thought Ashland would turn Stimson down. But he didn't. He seemed to feel that he had shown great perspicacity in this matter, and I think he wanted to convince Margaret of that publicly. You remember how she used to twit him: "Lawyers have no instinct for truth!"

"All right," Ashland said, laying his hands flat on the table before him, "it's really a very curious story. I meant to tell it sometime. I didn't know so very much more than the rest of you when Frye died three months ago. But I've gotten a lot of insight into the situation since—oh, a lot!"

Margaret lifted her fine profile with an incredulous, almost bitter little smile. All her weariness at what she thought his lack of understanding was in that expression.

"How did you?" she asked.

He looked down at his hands.

"Wait and see," he said slowly.

"He's never told you?" I whispered to Margaret.

She merely shook her head gravely and let her husband continue.

"When his wife left him and went to Europe two years and a half ago—"

"We thought the separation did it!" Stimson's fat voice broke in.

"No," Ashland said, "when she left he felt relieved. She's a fascinating creature, as you know, in her slim, golden-blond way. But she had led him an awful chase. She's the restless, temperamental kind—one scheme today, another tomorrow and at each scheme with a sort of hectic intensity. Always, too, and this is the point, blindly self-centered. She'd either drag everybody along with her or—or die in her tracks. One week she'd keep him out every night till three; next

week she'd shut herself up with her writing—she did poetry of a kind—and scream at any interruption. But that was no relief to him. Because when she came out she'd torment him to the quick with her jealousy and make him account for every minute of the time.

"Finally she came to the conclusion—just like a woman, isn't it?—that *he* stifled *her* individuality—and off she went! Frye always was the sensitive, delicately balanced sort, even at college, and her goings on had pretty nearly wrecked his nerves. So when she went he had a chance to recuperate. You've got to remember, of course, that she planned to stay in Paris just six months. He had no anxiety and they corresponded and when she wasn't there to torment him he loved her as much as ever. But the life she'd led him had sunk into him so deeply—had upset him so thoroughly—that he couldn't, just couldn't bring himself to ask her to come back. And, although she was the one who had left, she wouldn't come back without being asked. Again—just like a woman!"

"Quite natural, though," I ventured to put in and again Margaret nodded gravely.

"Maybe so," Ashland went on, "and Frye's morbid conscience made him consider her point of view closely. But he couldn't do it. That's all. His nervous system was so constituted that the very thought of the old life made him tremble—actually tremble and shake. He would test himself and just to imagine his wife at him again made him turn pale."

"He didn't love her!" one of the women threw in sentimentally.

"Yes, he did," Ashland insisted. "He finally, at the end of the first year, stated his case to her rather frankly."

"Did you see his letters?" Margaret asked quickly.

He shook his head.

"No, but her answers. They were in his desk. Immediately after his death I read a good many of them on an impulse. Of course, this needn't go farther." There was a murmur of assent. "The facts are as I have stated them. At that time he dropped hints to me of his situation and the letters confirmed them. A little later he stopped telling me anything, seemed, in fact, rather to avoid me."

He took a sip of wine. No one spoke. We all felt that he was but now coming to the momentous part of his story. When he spoke again we knew that we were right.

"At the beginning of the second year he drew closer to another woman. It's clearly marked in Mrs. Frye's innuendoes and his evident

attempts to evade but not deny. At that time, too, he began to jot down notes—you couldn't call it a diary—in a year book."

He paused for a minute. A hush was in the room. The dusk had now floated in and seemed to isolate the yellow points of the candles and the pale faces and shoulders of the women which rose out of the soft gloom.

"I'm not supposed to be a sentimental person," Ashland said slowly, "and it's true, no doubt. But I think I have hold of the situation that developed in Frye's life. Remember the hectic sort of a chase his wife had led him—clawed at his life and soul continually (that's his own expression) like a bird of prey; kept him in excitement, suspense, terror. . . . The other woman was the kind that gave and—and—sustained, did everything Gertrude Frye could never do. He said the other woman was like a Spring evening—serene and cool and sweet! Evidently she helped him get a grip on himself again and made him happier, because more at one with himself, than he had ever been before. And they didn't have much of a chance, either.

"Everybody, of course, knew Frye to be a married man and expected Gertrude back and, for all we know, the other woman was bound, too. Anyhow he complains that they never had more than two or three hours of each other, that they had to sneak around and hide. What consoled him deeply—especially by contrast—was her punctuality. He made quite a long note on that. Gertrude had always kept him waiting, hanging around, wearing his nerves thin. This woman, with so much more reason and excuse, never did. So their meetings, pitifully few and brief as they seem to have been, never began with a jar. Whenever they met they stepped out of the misery and jangle and ugliness of life into a purer and a finer world."

He paused again and I thought I saw a gleam of moisture in Margaret's eyes. But she couldn't take anything he said at its full value.

"You're getting poetical," she threw out lightly though with a little catch in her voice.

"I'm only reporting, you know," he said with just a touch of irritation.

Then he spoke in a more matter of fact way.

"It's clear enough that he wanted her to go away with him openly and let Gertrude divorce him. But she wouldn't do it. I'm not sure that she had any moral scruples. But, whether from experience or

not—maybe just from his—she hadn't any very high opinion of married life. He has a long note on an afternoon they spent walking by the Hudson—an Autumn afternoon too, curiously enough—and he pleaded with her passionately and even taxed her with not caring for him. But she refused, according to his account, just because she cared so much. She told him that, somehow, marriage developed an evil sense of possession in most women and that then, illogically to be sure, they despised the man for letting himself be possessed and run so completely. She became quite intense and even epigrammatic, according to him, and ended the discussion by saying: 'All marriages are ruined and vulgarized by home-life!'

II

Ashland looked around and a little hubbub of protest arose and Stimson rather amused us by saying naively he hadn't ever noticed it, and Mrs. Stimson said petulantly it was another example of women always slandering their own sex. But Margaret remarked quickly:

"No, it was just saying what everybody knows but is too polite to express."

A discussion threatened to arise, but I urged Ashland to go on.

"You've got to motivate a suicide, you know," I told him. "All this sounds rather—"

He waved his hand. "I'm trying my best to make you see it all as I've come to see it. In spite of the reluctance of the woman to go farther than she had gone, and that was a very little way—those two were happy. Frye wrote it down deliberately, over and over again. He had never, in fact, been happy before. He had lost his mother early and married young. He had been hustled about and dominated and battered spiritually—as he put it—all his life. This woman, even when they were together, especially when they were together, knew how to put his soul at ease, how to let his own mind expand and his own impulses have free play at last and unchidden. She understood him, she knew what he needed; she never troubled him with her own cares and difficulties but curbed the insistence of her own personality in the service of his. Even more than most American men he hadn't believed such things possible. Oh, our women are devoted nurses in sickness and will stick to you if your troubles are melodramatic. But did you ever see one who, after marriage, subdued herself, didn't, in however high-class a way, nag—but try to give her husband a chance to live his

own life? No, let's not discuss it! At all events, Gertrude Frye wasn't that kind and the other woman was. When they separated Frye went home and thought about her and once in a while he would grow quite mystical and call her an angel with healing on her wings."

A gust of the autumnal air came in and made the candles flicker. No one spoke and we heard the rustle of the leaves outside. The story had gripped us at last and Margaret shaded her eyes with her hand.

"The trouble was, of course," Ashland went on, "that Frye had to correspond with Gertrude. Her letters—I've seen them, as I told you—were like nasty little explosions. She wouldn't come back and she wouldn't leave him alone either. Sometimes she described herself as lonesome and tried to wring him with compassion; sometimes as in a whirl of people and attentions and then she wanted to make him jealous. In every note there was some jar, some stab, some hidden threat, something disturbing and rasping. She kept her notepaper in sachet so long that even from Europe her letters troubled him with the perfume that reminded his senses of her most intimately.

"I don't say she did that intentionally. But the trick was characteristic of all her instincts. However, he got to the point where he could live down each letter in a day or two. Then, as he said, he went back to his Paradise. Both he and the other woman, by the way, deluded themselves more and more as to the precariousness of their situation. In the intervals between letters they forgot about Gertrude—agreed to forget about her. That was the size of it. Of course, he tried to make his angel come to him openly. But on that point the lady's decision seems to have been final.

"Then the crash came suddenly—from their point of view—as it might, of course, have come at any moment. Gertrude got into trouble about money and about a man. She had flirted too outrageously and the man demanded what he had been made to expect. She cabled for funds and then announced her departure for America.

"Frye was shaken by a cold terror: he was wretched in proportion to the happiness he had enjoyed. He saw the old nerve-racking life ahead of him. He committed his first flagrant indiscretion, it seems, by going to the house of the other woman and begging her, piteously, to flee with him. She couldn't bring herself to yield but she half-promised that, if Gertrude could be persuaded to release him, she would try, as she told him, not to desert him."

III

Ashland stopped rather suddenly and looked up as though he were aware of something uncanny. Other candles had flickered out and we were almost in darkness. He half rose but I said to him: "Go on!" because I thought that the mood and the scene suited the story.

"Frye went to the pier to meet Gertrude," he continued, "she had half a dozen boxes in addition to her trunks, tried to smuggle through all sorts of stuff, half-fainted in the taxi, recovered suddenly and insisted on luncheon at the Ritz, became every moment more radiant and domineering and, before they got home, filled Frye with a prostrating sense of the old terrorized whirl. She didn't reproach or question him this time, but acted as if nothing had happened—nothing! Only she kept him busy, attending to her, waiting for her, making love to her, leaving not the loophole of a moment for escape or communication with anyone. He tried to formulate that in his diary and she pounced on that and tried to destroy it. She failed—he caught her just in time—and then it was she who acted the part of supremely injured innocence over the glimpses she had had and immediately grasped the magnificent weapon of what she called his 'outrageous infidelities!' "

"Good Lord," the honest Stimson burst out, "why didn't he run—just run?"

"Because," Ashland said slowly, "he found his condition worse than all his fears. Not only did Gertrude absorb him, but he found the memory of the other woman—that memory which was his dearest possession—slipping irretrievably from his heart and mind: because he discovered that, torment him as Gertrude would, yet—in spite of his irritation and wretchedness and, at moments, flaring hatred—he loved her . . . loved her in the weakness of his subjection and despair and so was doomed to that subjection and despair forever."

Ashland sprang up by some irresistible impulse and I saw Margaret stagger to her feet just as, with a swift gesture, he switched on the electric light. In the full glare they faced each other across the table and he saw the unrestrained tears of an immitigable sorrow in her eyes. I caught at her hot hand in a warning grasp, but already the words were out:

"He didn't love her . . . you don't understand . . ." And her voice had a mournfulness that I shall never forget.

Ashland went white to the very ears, but he played the game. He sat down and I drew Margaret gently back to her seat. Then he swal-

lowed a few times as if he had something furry and bitter in his throat and said:

"You see how the man was tied down. He couldn't get away, he felt degraded and crazy. So he—stepped out."

He gulped down a glass of wine and we all began to jabber—yes, that's the word—just to make a noise, don't you know. And I can't tell you how we ever—it's like the grisliest nightmare—managed to say good-bye to our host and hostess and get out of the house and walk to the station—(we swore we wanted to walk) over all those solemn Autumn leaves. . . .

IV

Oh yes, the Ashlands have lived together right along. Of course, no one knows on just what terms. He hadn't anything vulgar to reproach her with and he's very punctilious by nature. Margaret has never betrayed anything except that, just once, a long while ago, in a discussion that came up she looked at me hard and said that cowardice in the face of life and love was an awful crime, that it killed souls.

And Gertrude—she's now Mrs. McFarland, you know, very rich and fashionable—has been known to complain that, especially in the Autumn season, some impudent person persists in decorating the grave of the late Mr. Frye.

A SONG

by Lizette Woodworth Reese

Love along my garden went,
Plucking white and red,
Just a little wreath to make
For his idle head.

When I followed after him
Sobbing and forlorn,
Not a rose of white or red—
But many a thorn!

DROUGHT

by Lixette Woodworth Reese

Silence—and in the air
A stare.
One bush, the color of rust,
Stands in the endless lane;
And farther on, hot, hard of pane,
With roof shrunk back
Headlong against the sky,
A house is thrust;
Between the twain,
Like meal poured from a sack,
Stirless, foot high—
The dust.

EARTH AND SEA

*by Oliver St. John Gogarty**

It does me good to see the ships
Back safely from the deep sea main;
To see the slender mizzen tips
And all the ropes that stood the strain;

To hear the old men shout Ahoy!
And watch them as they swing and throw,
To haul the cable to the buoy
A line that's light enough to go;

And sea, when sails are lashed to spars,
The men for whom earth's free from care,
And heaven a clock with certain stars,
And hell a third-rate word to swear.

* Dr. Gogarty, the famous Dublin poet, raconteur and physician, was the original from whom James Joyce created the figure Buck Mulligan in *Ulysses*.

THE FRUIT OF MISADVENTURE

by *Waldo Frank*

'... and they entered the Palace and golden fruit was served unto them on platters of amethyst. But the fruit satisfied them not, so that they went empty to their couches.'

—*Caspar de Maître-Jois.*

I

IT was not the cold of the fresh room that made it difficult for Thomas Braceby to arise from bed in the morning; it was the weariness in his heart. But for all his forty-five years, Mr. Braceby was not wise enough to see this clearly, nor honest enough to avow it. So one night, after he had tucked himself under his luxurious blue quilt and between the linen sheets that seemed hard to him and unfriendly, he said to his valet:

"Jones, from now on open the windows in the library and throw aside the portières. That'll give me enough air. With the windows in this room open also, there's too much chill in the morning and too much draught for my catarrh."

And Jones told Cook, as they sat over their midnight beer, that the master was getting old.

"Why, he's been old for five years," said Cook, pouring a glass and munching a slice.

"How's that?" asked Jones, who had been only five months in the service.

"The sign of a bachelor's getting old is when he puts a stop to women—not when he sleeps in a room with the windows shut. Mr. Braceby ain't had a love affair since he was forty."

"That's gettin' old awful young," observed Jones. "Perhaps he had an unhappy turn-down and that's what stopped him."

"Perhaps," said Cook with a superior air, "but it's not true, just the same. Mr. Braceby never cared for no woman yet that didn't care for him. He never had a turn-down. He just got disgusted—that's all,—tired. And what's gettin' old, if it ain't that?"

"He's a handsome gentleman." Jones thought of his waistcoats.

"A fine one." Cook thought of his Christmas gifts.

"Well," Jones slapped the bottle on the kitchen table with the

philosophical emphasis consequent on thinking of waistcoats, "such is life!"

"Even the most gifted and the most blessed of us has to bear bitter fruit." Cook could mix metaphors as well as sauces.

"Wha' d'ye mean?" Jones was startled by a statement so obviously above him.

"What do I mean, young man? What I say. Mr. Braceby's been a gay and mighty man these twenty years."

"Well?"

"Well," said Cook, "sooner or later, the tree has to bear fruit!"

With all the contempt of a baffled Philistine, Jones looked at this new Deborah. "Annie, you're talkin' like a rabbit. I'm going to bed."

II

The following morning Mr. Braceby rose early—at nine—and ate his breakfast in quickened tempo. With his last cup of coffee he instructed Jones to call Mrs. Martin Linck on the wire. Up to now there had been a heavy scowl upon his usually gentle face. But after he had made a luncheon engagement on the telephone his expression softened and his cheeks wreathed with a benign smile. All of this, however, was beyond the comprehension of Jones, for he knew Mrs. Linck, and she was fifty if she was a day. But Jones did not speak of his puzzlement to Cook, for Cook might have understood what he could not—and that would have touched his masculine pride.

Five years before all this, Thomas Braceby had undergone a revolution. He had been sitting in his library one winter night, too weary to undress and too apathetic to ignite his gas-logs. It was in the same apartment where he lived now, a rather colorless, yet elegant and completely comfortable suite of rooms in the club district of New York. While by no means ideal, it had always seemed to him the most convenient setting for his cultivated vagabondage. Braceby had never become attached to a home, and the conception of aught more than a purely physical roost did not enter his mind. What he needed was a cozy living-room for those brief hours when he should choose to live there; a dining-room fitted for the exigencies of a capacious dinner; a bed-chamber in which he could sleep, and a pair of additional rooms in which he could house chance masculine and feminine guests. What he demanded in particular was freedom to live as he wished and a retinue of servants, in his apartment and in the entrance-hall below,

who were eager and efficient in carrying out his wishes. All this he had. And everything else that he required he found in his near vicinity; to the east of him in the stately homes where he was always welcome, and to the west of him in café and theater, where he had long been known.

Upon the evening in question, Braceby did not return shivering from his hollow club, stand disconsolate in the mocking light of a Tiffany lamp and yearn for a little cottage with a wife. He had had an interesting time at the club, hearing the tale of a chum who had walked five hundred miles unescorted up the Yalu River. And whereas the subject of cottages did not engross him, Braceby was convinced that he knew more of certain wives than their husbands. What irritated him was that there was no one within earshot to kindle those artificial gas-logs. And what frightened him was not the gray, cavernous vision of a deserted old age with two rheumatic knees unadorned by grandchildren, but the perverse impulse within him to go to bed with his clothes on, out of sheer dislike for taking them off. Needless to say, Braceby drove the impulse from him like a leprous thing, and resolved upon the instant to discharge his valet in the morning. True, he had granted him leave of absence. But a valet not clairvoyant enough to feel that his master was coming home that evening, soured and frozen and tired out, was no valet for Thomas Braceby. Body-servants and priests must be possessed of a workable, mystical sixth sense.

The elaborate gilt clock, shaped like a globe and supported by two rather distorted angels, ticked away. The shadows were thick on the mahogany bookcase, within whose glass doors, ribbed in satin rose, Braceby stored his spirits, his cordials and his poker-chips. On the thus prostituted piece of furniture stood a handsome silver frame, from out of which came the eerie eyes of a famous actress. And on the silk-muffled walls between the brocade drawn windows, the head of a moose loomed ominous and imposing. The light emanating from the lamp (a huge bronze structure upon three carved legs, which blossomed six feet from the floor into a heavy replica of gnarled oak-leaves) served merely to emphasize the gloom. And Thomas Braceby sat in his armchair (it was a family relic and its two arms represented the necks and heads of very elongated lions) and impotently shivered.

Then the bell of the house-telephone gave a sharp ring and subsided. Braceby's orders downstairs were of long standing—that he was not deaf and that a fifty-second clamor was no more convincing than the notice of a moment.

"Damn. Who's that?" muttered Braceby, and wondered whether it might not perhaps be someone who would oblige him by turning on his heat.

"There's a lady down here, sir," said the well-trained Cerberus, who, according to Braceby, was distinguished from most of his variety by the fact that he actually had one solid head on his shoulders.

"Is she short and rather thin?" asked the bachelor.

"No, sir. She's tall. She's dark. She's veiled."

"Let her up."

Braceby moved laboriously to the hall, loosed the door-latch so it could be opened from without, and returning with a meditative step, sank back into his mid-Victorian armchair. The precise picture of the hall-boy had prepared him for an untoward occurrence. A moment later the woman stepped into the light. Braceby rose from his chair. Instead of coming forward he turned toward the fireplace.

"You shouldn't have come here, Florence," he said calmly, "but now that you're here—" he bent over and placed a match to the gas-logs, "sit down."

"Is that the way you greet me on my first visit?"

The tall, slender woman stood before the door, which she had shut behind her. An opaque veil, glistening with her frozen breath, was still over her face.

The gas took fire with a sharp explosion, and the clumsy man jumped back in momentary fright. Mrs. Narvin, without a tremor, threw a seal coat upon a chair and placed her hat on the bookcase. She then drew off her gloves, tossed them before the silver frame upon whose occupant she found time to bestow a candid glance, and came forward toward the man. The entire score of her actions had been executed with a despatch of which a *comédienne* in a Protean rôle might well have boasted and with a power of deliberate suggestion whence Balzac could have gleaned her history.

Braceby, upon whom such evidence of feminine prowess was not wasted, stood expectant, well aware that she had more to say.

"Why do you receive me like this? Is it the way you feel?"

Braceby drew up a chair and sat beside her in the heat of the gas-logs.

"It is precisely the way I feel, my dear friend."

Mrs. Narvin measured the man before her with restrained bewilderment. There was in her careful scrutiny the interest of a calm yet

worried combatant who realizes that to win one must first have understood, and that to understand one must first convey the impression that one already does. Braceby looked exactly his age. His sleek, black hair was faintly, regularly greying. His eyes twinkled with a constant inner observation, even as they gleamed somewhat coldly with that lack of real good-will which accrues from too much looking-on and too little taking part. His face, withal, was as kindly as it was strong, and the lines about his large, thin mouth were the tracings of a wholesome sensuality and a great readiness to smile and to respond. In contrast to the soft chiseling of his chin and to the slight bagginess of his cheeks that were gently wreathed, his forehead appeared serenely aloof, and his heavy, protrusive brows that offset the sunken grey of his eyes seemed almost dangerous and certainly austere.

With an easy grace, indicative of experience and assurance, Braceby stretched out his hands and held hers, tenderly poised between his upturned palms. His fingers tapered and were thin.

"You have come to see me. Florence," he said, "because, presumably, you wanted me."

"Yes. Because I wanted you."

"And you shall have me. But in a far sincerer manner than you suppose. This shall not be the usual love affair. Instead of taking you in my arms and giving you *that*—and for all the lovely alchemy of women, that is still a coarse, masterful, faulty thing—I shall keep you near me, as you are now, my friend, and I shall give you myself." He paused. Mrs. Narvin was thirty. The thought struck him that he was an impudent fraud to treat her as if she knew less than he did. "I am going to make a confession," he added, hesitantly.

"The confession that, now I have come, your love is frightened and has disappeared?"

"Just that—" said Braceby, "Now that you have come, my love is frightened at such a splendid, heedless sacrifice. And, in the realization of how small, compared to it, is that which I have offered to you and which you have at last come to take—I no longer dare, I no longer want to offer it. In fact, I withdraw it, it is too petty."

There was a silence. Mrs. Narvin withdrew her hands from his and then returned them. The room still froze.

"Do not judge yet," Braceby went on, heartened. "You do not understand. Listen and perhaps you may."

Like a heroine in a Pinero play, Mrs. Narvin dropped into a chair

and prepared to give ear. This man before her, alas, was no romantic lover; what he had to offer was vastly more vocal than passionate, but such as it was, she felt a yearning to receive it, and so she sat in silence while he rumbled on. A woman wants all. If that all is less than one per cent, she still wants that less than one per cent.

"Florence," he began, "what I am saying now would sound truer, doubtless, in the mouth of a sentimental youth addressing his first flame. The point is that such a youth and I have a point in common. We have never loved. But the lad who could speak so has never loved because he has never had a chance. And I have never loved because I have had too many chances. So it is that while the words of the boy would be comical, my confession is nearer tragedy. You are going to leave this room, in half an hour, far cleaner than you came into it. For there is a part of me that has the power of chastening, despite that other part that has so often defiled. And that part alone you shall have. The other part, that other women knew, I shall tell you of. For I want you to take that away with you also—to bury it; it will not stain your life. And I crave to be rid of it. Oh, you do not dream how I crave to be rid of it!"

Mrs. Narvin coughed sympathetically and Braceby plowed on.

"Can you imagine, Florence, what it is like not to be able to respond, with one's whole heart, to the life-bestowing embraces of a woman? Well, when I have felt anything at all—which has not been often—that is what I have felt. I have felt emptiness, disgust; I have felt unworthiness and anger. But the most fearful of feelings is that of silence, of inner silence against the bestowal of a woman; it is the fear that this and this alone, might arise from what you offer which must keep me, for once, from running such a risk. For that inability to forget and to be equal to a woman's gift is killing me. I love you so dearly now that it would kill me to feel this with you. And yet, so often have I felt it when I seemed most certain not to, that I am afraid—I am a coward. I will not risk the joy I have now, of being your equal in love and in devotion. I will not put my feeling to the test; for I am afraid I might fail. And that is the reason, Florence, why you must go back to your house."

Mrs. Narvin pressed her lips to his cold hands. And Braceby, pausing a moment, went on with a diminished ease.

"Let me tell you, Florence, of one event in my life which will help illumine this. I never knew the woman's name. But there were a

thousand ways of being sure she was a gentlewoman. She looked something like you. Perhaps that is why I was reminded of her. For any other of my miserable misadventures would have served as well. Perhaps because she also was tall and dark and silent and because her eyes, like yours, seemed simply to be the splendid symbols of a woman's tears, I am the stronger to prevent this ending as that did; and the more fearful lest it might.

"She came to me, as I say, nameless. I never sought to learn her name. But I wanted to marry her. I proposed, if she had a husband, that she should divorce him and let me legitimize her gift. She said she had no husband; but that she would not marry me. And I understood why. There was no continuity in my love. It was a passion, a tenderness, built upon no deep giving of myself. And this she felt; and the fact that she felt it and that I did not prove her wrong was torture to me. That was more than ten years ago. I pleaded with her: 'Tell me who you are and this deeper thing will come.' She shook her head."

Braceby buried his face in his hands. The scene was going very well. Then, once more, he sought those of Mrs. Narvin.

"'Bear me a child,' I pleaded, 'and all this will change!' My friend shivered as if I had suggested an unnatural thing; and a horror came into her eyes that I would die rather than see again in yours. 'No,' she said, 'I could not bear *you* a child. It would not be your child. Only your mind—not your heart—would know that it was your child.' I never saw her again after that time. Months after, I received word telling me that a child had been born. Her word framed her indictment: I must never try to find that child; even as I had sworn never to try to find her."

"But you must have prayed God to find them for you!"

"No," answered Braceby, "I did not have the heart to pray for that. The woman was right. She had felt the truth about me, but only in the act which was to make that truth so tragically present. I do not want you to feel that truth. Rather than have you come upon it in the flaying of your own ecstasy as did she, I would flay myself as I am doing. I was condemned by the one Justice that is never wrong—the instinct of a mother about a father. I have no doubt it was for their good. It was a bitter good."

"All good is bitter good," mused Mrs. Narvin.

"You do not think I am feigning this to be free of you?"

"I know you love me as you are able, Tom."

"Listen then—" Braceby resumed her hands and the meretricious logs pelted little yellow gleams upon his quiet face. "Once, I think, I loved a woman in the way that that silent woman knew I had not loved her. It was the splendid period of my life. I was twenty-five then—fifteen years ago. She did not love me. And that love died."

"Perhaps it really didn't die."

"It amounts to the same thing."

And Florence rose and went home. They parted friends.

III

Braceby returned to the room and turned out the gas. Thank God, he was rid of another woman! And not only of another woman, but in a larger sense, of woman. In all his play-acting, indeed, there had been a strong element of honesty and sincerity; if the face that he had turned to Mrs. Narvin had not been wholly his real face, it had at least been the face that he wanted to present to women, to the world, to life itself. Old memories thronged in his mind, beguiling him and torturing him. He saw the dead years as vain and hollow things; he felt all the bitterness of cold emotions and wasted days. Until the blue grey of morning oozed through the dark green of the window shades and cast a clammy, sepulchral light through the room, he sat there in his chair, mulling over forgotten and poignant things. Then he went to bed—in his clothes.

When he awoke he was cold and stiff, but somehow the feeling of futility, of emptiness, of tragic vanity was gone. It had driven him out of his club; it had caused him to turn away from the proffered kisses of Florence Narvin; it had given him the worst evening of his whole life. But now that feeling was gone, and in its place was the thrill of a new purpose. The idea came to him that the pale day outside, raw and anemic as it was at its birth, would see great changes for him, and perhaps go down into his history as a great turning point. A notion flitted around the edges of his consciousness; he reached out for it, trying to pin it down to coherence; it finally showed itself as a determination to make a call upon an old friend, Mrs. Linck. He was done with women; he would now try humanity. A vast sentimentality surged through him. He ceased to pity himself and began vaguely to admire himself.

Mrs. Linck received him in her working library. She was one of those wealthy women of New York in whom charity has become as

great a passion as, in others, bridge or dancing or adultery. In all cases, the passion has a common ground. It is regarded, in the given light, as the thing to do. If the woman be temperamentally fitted for her chosen field, as was Mrs. Linck, there may even come of it some measure of accomplishment. A great city produces some charity-workers who actually do good, even as it possesses some bad wives who actually bestow love. Mrs. Linck was the president of a great orphan asylum and trustee in a dozen allied philanthropies. She had a private telephone in her private library and her private secretary was a great gleaner of publicity. She was a well-rounded automaton.

As the much-affaired woman and the denaturalized Don Juan sat together over their doilies and their mushrooms, Mrs. Linck pushed the talk to a quick conclusion.

"So you've decided, Thomas, that you want the girl?"

"Yes, I've decided. If she's all you say she is and that she seems to be—I am ready. I have made a failure of my life as a companion of women. I've never been so much as a bad husband. I'm eager to see if Nature singled me out, perhaps, to be a father."

Next day club New York, social Manhattan and bibulous Broadway had a common interrogation point about which to huddle heads, chatter queries and produce preposterous explanations. Why was Tom Braceby giving up his staid, time-proved apartment? Why was he moving into a country house surrounded by forty green acres, in the vague wilds of Westchester County, where he would have no neighbor more exciting than John D. Rockefeller? And who, on earth, was this beautiful, shy, fifteen-year-old wisp of a girl with whom he was determined to brave such solitude?

Sophia Linck disseminated through the more casual channels of her well-trained publicity that Mr. Braceby, at the express bidding of her orphan asylum, was adopting a daughter. Broadway, craving ever her enormities, whispered that this daughter he was adopting had probably an old, biological right to her new legal title. And in the Fifth Avenue clubs which had refused complacently and patronizingly to accept Braceby's sudden and amazing virtue as other than a concealed viciousness, the smoky fumes of the Scotch highballs had it that the girl was neither daughter nor adopted daughter, but prospective wife, and perhaps even wife *de facto*.

"It is very possible," mused Braceby, when the ideas of these three great schools of conjecture were detailed to him, "it is more than

possible that all these theorists may be wrong. It is impossible that more than one of them be right."

In the meantime, he thought he was profoundly happy. Only Cook, in her less sporadic duties, regretted the Egypt in which she had been accustomed so long to prepare flesh-pots. Diet was a point in the new father's careful preparation.

"This plain food will be good for my gout," he apologized one day when he had made a visit to the kitchen, "and besides, Annie, you're getting altogether too fat."

IV

He called her Cherette. Her hair was indeed a crown and a halo to her face. It waved like an amber-tinted cloud over her forehead; it went in exquisite offsetting to the transparent texture of her cheeks. Far below her ears it fell, terminant in a delicate, pale down that accentuated the soft fulness of her neck, whose nape curved out. What one noticed first about Cherette was her hair. What one pitted against that first delight was her eyes. From their large, half-shut casements looked forth a different creature from that suggested by the rest of her.

Her hair was that of a child—exquisite, innocent, untrammelled in her youth's poesy, ignorant of any ugliness against which to struggle. Of such a flowering was also the lithe lightness of her body, its instinctive grace, the swift response of mouth and hand to the airy pulse of girlhood. Such was the sum of her every action: the craning of her neck, the unconscious bend of her waist, the curious habit of placing her long, nerveless hands upon her boyish hips, the sudden kicking-out and crossing of her little slippered feet as she sat in her rocking-chair and laughed and sparkled. But to all these fair tokens her eyes were a discountenancing denial. Braceby, when he had first met her at the asylum had noticed her hair and her laughter before he was struck with her eyes. Else he had never adopted her. His first impressions seemed to brand as ridiculous the vague feeling which came later that the child knew more than he did and that she was more likely to be his master than his pliant charge.

Perhaps it was a sub-conscious impulse of self-concealment that caused Cherette forever to hold her eyes half-shut and to let her girlish tresses fall on her forehead in such a manner as to shield her eyes from a too unhampered scrutiny. Her pupils were a light, piercing blue, curiously near in nuance to the blueish white about them. And they

peered forth from long, dark lashes with the wisdom of a second life. They gave the suggestion of disillusioned, compelling womanhood. However gayly they seemed to laugh, however bitterly to weep (although that was strangely seldom), the soul behind them seemed eternally aloof from these natural effusions, and too worldly wise in any way to be a part of them.

In the actions of Cherette, however, there was no slightest reinforcement to the canny look of her eyes. She was a child in every word of her mouth, in every creation of her mind, even as in every movement of her body. The crass, seasoned creature that peered forth from this gentle frame seemed inarticulate and independent of the actual, living girl. So Braceby forgot promptly that he had ever been impressed by its existence. Indeed, it would have required a mystic to remain aware of it, longer than a moment, in the face of her confuting presence. And Braceby was only a repentant bachelor, blindly adoring before the mystery of girlhood, bathed in a flush of Spring after too long consorting in a hot-house.

Braceby's chief joy in his new duties lay in the feeling that this seductive child was beyond comprehension. His stubborn optimism impelled him to apply all virtues to this Unknown because of the sharp lessons of his life, which had taught him to apply all vices to what he understood. Five hundred years ago Braceby might have burned his instinctive incense to the Unknown. As it was, a luxurious estate became his monk's-cell, and Cherette became his goddess. Each age has its own technique for the expression of the music of all the ages. Braceby would not have appreciated his analogy with Saint Simeon Stylites. But then, the ascetic who worshiped God on a pillar would not have liked the imputation that he, too, was a mere human animal, feeding his senses a sharp ration of the Unknown because they were not content with more obvious fodder. Simeon, in his sensual disgust, became a saint. Braceby, in his, became a father. Both conditions, in man, are secondary states. One can attain to neither without having been first a lover.

It was not long before Cherette had become attached to her protector. The situation between the pair took on the fresh, airy nature of its setting. Braceby was guilty of no far-fetched trope when he said that his heart was as new and as green as the lawn about his country-house. What time the slender, tall girl was not busied with her various masters, who came daily from town to teach her the amplified "three R's"

of culture, she spent with Braceby. They took long walks, reaching far out from his estate. They went on smashing gallops after a few lessons had made of Cherette an efficient Amazon and Braceby had become relimbered of muscle. And evenings, they would sit on the porch and she would chatter, or in the glow of the living-room's real log-fire, and he would read aloud.

They read "The Idylls of the King," and Cherette was in love with Guinevere and bored by Arthur. They read an expurgated "Gulliver's Travels," and when the girl learned that the tale she had read was but a part of the tale Swift had written, she was disconsolate and her favorite book became the object of her anger. Braceby tried Scott, but the child buried her head in the rug and fell asleep while the blaze of the logs turned her hair to liquid bronze. Then, he resorted to "Paul and Virginia," but Cherette was disgusted and refused to listen. The Indian romances of Chateaubriand fared no better.

"I don't like stories," she said, one day. "They're so slow. I could make 'em up much faster. Besides, so many words one right after another sound ugly."

Musically, the child was exceptionally promising. She had already had five years' instruction on the piano when Braceby adopted her. And to a swift facility in technic, she soon added a joyousness of interpretation which made her an adept in the lighter, more brilliant manner. Her teacher, eager for quick results, realized her penchant and versed her in the modern French and Italian schools to the neglect of the nobler Germans. At this, Braceby was, if anything, rejoiced; Brahms and Schumann and Beethoven had always seemed to him the mere necessary *impedimenta* of boring musical afternoons. The only really great composer for whom Cherette had active sympathy was Bach—the most cruel, the most unsentimental, perhaps the most eternal of them all. By the same token, she despised Mozart, even as she thought "silly" the Madonna of Raphael that had hung over her bed and which she had caused to be removed. She might have become attached to Wagner if her instructor had given her more than "Lohengrin" and "Tannhäuser" to know him by. But the unerring instinct of the girl caught the cloying effusiveness, the blatant Teutonism of these operas and unstintingly condemned them. Sentimental music of a sort she liked—the sort that was really cold and heartless underneath. Mendelssohn and Massenet, whose sweetness is that of a deep, feminine, uncritical nature, she did not love. But the false surface-

sentiment of Puccini, with its basis of bitter cynicism, attracted her; the delicate, metallic coldness of Debussy she portrayed with an exquisite although of course unconscious sympathy. And Grieg, that sensual pessimist with the soul of a stage necromancer and the hand of a dandy, was for a long time her favorite.

To a musician, these tastes would have served to bare her soul—and annotate her eyes. To Braceby, they were mere tastes, signifying nothing. For to Braceby, music was the mere pleasurable pelting of sound on ears. To how many professional musicians, in good sooth, is it anything more? If folk knew better the meaning of the music they instinctively prefer they would be more chary of confession. But, then, if folk knew the meaning of the features on their faces, we should all wear masks. Life and Ignorance-of-Life were created at the same instant. Had the birth of the latter been delayed one moment, it would have sufficed for Knowledge to snuff out the former.

And so, in this gentle haze of illusion, a blissful year passed for Thomas Braceby. In both, there was the gleam of a newly discovered youth—in the young girl as in the man. And against the lying texture of their so different, yet so pathetically like illusions, glowed the deepest of truths—the resurgent impulse of life to feed rather on dreams than upon facts; to spin webs of fancy rather than unravel knots of actuality. Life knows, in its workings, how to transcend the tawdry confines to which Reason would hold it. Cherette, in her childish conviction that the world was a joyous theater fashioned and centered for her dalliance, might be mistaken; Braceby in his belief that Cherette was all that his suppressed and atrophied idealism conjured up, might be mistaken. In the essence both were right—both lived truly. And the stuff of their dreamings was more eternal than all those paltry marks of mind and body which men call truths and scientists set up as their exclusive idols. Unfortunately, these diaphanous webs were not to preserve.

Cherette was now seventeen. And Braceby had become "Daddie." Indeed, they were chums, and the guardian was the docile member of the fraternity. He went even so far as to take lessons with her. He crammed his recalcitrant mind with dry pages of history and abstruse algebraic formulae in order to sustain himself at her level. Even such of his acts as had no immediate bearing on her own were colored and

tempered by her presence. Thus, he tightened his friendship with all the matrons that he knew in the city and dropped totally from heterodox companionship, even as he had ceased entertaining thoughts and theories at variance with the salubrious bringing-up of his charge.

For two years, he had gone to no theaters, save at matinées. Cherette loved the theater—indiscriminately. The sheer joy of performance and illusion sufficed her. She sat ecstasied before the garish carpentries of a musical comedy; and she sat ecstasied at a great actor's rendition of Hamlet. For opera, however, she did not care. The music she loved, perhaps—in musical form. But to such spectacles as those of pot-bellied tenors amorous before obese sopranos, who rent the air with their lung power while in the last throes of consumption, she could not bring her suffrage. Her sense of the ludicrous was too poignant. And her instinctive demand for simplicity—in dress, in speech, in art—prevailed against this bastard commodity under cover of which so much divine music is palmed off upon a jaded public. Since moreover, Braceby was not in advance with a command that she should love this and disdain that, her judgments came honestly and with a reason.

Save for such expeditions to the city in search of plays and concerts, the pair kept strictly to themselves on the Westchester estate. Their summer trips were curtailed to a single month. Cherette preferred her home to the hotels and her Daddie to the slightly ironic kindness of the persons she met in them. She had no longing, whatsoever, for the companionship of girls of her own age. She felt herself older and wiser than these daintily garnished dolls. And the callow, slack-chinned youths who dawdled in the wake of them and were only too eager to transfer their rudimentary dandyism from the dolls to herself, inspired her with a withering contempt. They were silly; the little girls were silly; their severe mothers were silly; the hotels were silly. Cherette preferred her Daddie. And Braceby preferred Cherette.

It was a ruddy morning of new Autumn. The eager pair were off early for a ramble in those flushed hills whose depths have been scarce discovered by New Yorkers. There was one spot to which they had frequently gone in the past year—a spot thickly garlanded in aspen, where generations of foliage had spread a gentle carpet of moss and underbrush. It was away from the by-path, and so tightly tucked in from the more open woods that a faithful people would have deemed it the retreat of some seclusive god. The materialistic Cherette called it her Bird-cage.

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Braceby seated himself carefully on a rock and Cherette flung herself flat upon the ground, burying her sharp, fine nose in the soil, and tossing her heels. The love-song came down to her from a dozen nests. The Bird-cage seemed to be as thick with birds as it was with trees. In the back of her head, she felt the powerful caress of the cold, clear heaven as it shone through the lacing of green and brown. She did not see it, but it was as real a part of her mental picture as the little red ant before her, struggling over its infinitesimal hills and dales and carrying a wisp of straw three times as large as itself. The sibilant brush of leaves against the air, the musical give of slender trees and the suffused minor murmur of all the feverish, innumerable world that buzzed and chirped and breathed in the wind-driven grass, conjoined into one subtle harmony and drenched the girl with a strange, delicious pain. Her heels ceased their tossing, as if wearied by some invisible resistance; her head sank to one side upon the moss and her eyes closed.

Through her thin dress, Cherette felt the sharp embrace of the earth upon her little, eager breasts and instinctively she huddled closer. A languor crept through her limbs and she stretched them out, aware that they too were hard—almost brutally hard—against that mysterious earth. Two slight twinges went out from her temples and met in a warm, seductive agony that quickened breath and benumbed thought. And so she lay, her hands clasped before her, her body tense and prone, her eyes burning against her lids. The blue of the sky shot through and merged with the warm, vital harmony of the birds and the Autumn-painted verdure. And to melt it rose a warm perfume—the soul of the earth—stinging her flesh to a new consciousness and quickening her senses until they lay quivering and receptive within the alluring notes of the woodland.

At first, it all seemed strange and Cherette was but half helpless before its ecstasy. But gradually, the myriad chants of the forest took on a more accustomed guise and became distinct; the girl's senses grew used to the sharp delights that were possessing them. Her mind bathed in the flood of feeling and became drenched, at one with it. The vital potency of Nature—ever most resurgent in Autumn when it is about to die—now merged her totally, soaking this young life with its eternal liquors until she became a vivid part. And when that moment came, Cherette was asleep—asleep in the world-rhythm which the leaves might whisper and the birds might chant, but which she was still too young to swing to, waking.

On the rock sat Thomas Braceby—and looked at the still, lithe figure and wondered and looked again. He was no longer a young man. There was grey in his hair and two thin creases forked out from beside his nose, tokens of long years of pressing his lips in resolution and shutting his eyes in pain or meditation. But of a sudden, all the weighing consciousness of age went from him, like a mist against the sun. And there came out, unveiled, a gleam of landscape which was new in his sight and glistening as if with dawn. Braceby had never had a youth. His life had been one endless missing it—all save the last two years whose color had been that of resignation. And now, blindly alive for its unnatural long wait, and the more blindly so for the drab mental field upon which it burst—a field of regret without an object and of submission without past pride—came this pent-up Spring with the Autumn chill and made the man possessed.

Braceby rose and stepped lightly—it was the tread of a boy—to the side of the sleeping girl. Gently, he touched her hair. Gently, he held his breath to consonance with hers; gently, he gazed at the sun-kissed down on her neck, at the curve of her back that withdrew within the wide-sashed, supple waist line. And as he pastured, the gentleness was swept up—not lost—in a new flood of fever that resembled the scarlet splashing in the trees, even as the softer impulse seemed mothered by the croon of branches and the slow slant of the sky above him.

Braceby clutched himself and regained his seat. In all ways, his passion was that of youth—even to the extent that he was unaware of it. Nature had caught him up in her interminable whirlwind, wrenched him from the flat strand of misadventure in which twenty years had stationed him and blown him to the tropic stronghold of her dominion; yet he sat serenely ignorant, as heedless of where he had been rocked as was Cherette, in her dreamless sleep, of the rhythm which had mastered her.

Braceby's love had devoured every fibre of his personality before Braceby became conscious that he was in love at all. Storm clouds become saturate before they burst. And to render this driving tempest, with its years of repression and its years of preparation, still more formidable, there came the need in its bursting to catch it up and hide it, lest one drop or flash of it fall upon the sunny object over which it was foregathered. Braceby tasted the essence of struggle in his need—once he was conscious—of keeping this new truth from the playful,

heedless child he had made his daughter. Can you imagine a black cloud, bristling with lightning, bulging with thunder, bursting with rain, swung by a naughty god over a sun-bathed hamlet and there rent asunder? And can you imagine what Titanic force it would require to muffle up that thunder, to drown that fire, and to snatch away that deluge ere it had reached the hamlet in its terrific downward charge? As such a gentle, budding life, the sentimental Braceby looked upon Cherette; and as such a devastating cloud-burst, Braceby looked upon his love for her. He had not grown aware of it until the moment of its breaking-out. And now his passionate need was to catch up this blight, to swerve it, to hide it, to annihilate it. Cherette must not only never hear; she must not even guess. The rift of a single fibre in her mind away from him would lose her altogether. And at the thought of such an end, the poor old fellow's temples beat like hammers.

Meantime, life went on. Cherette grew blithely toward womanhood and Braceby assumed his martyrdom with an ironic smile and a calm tendency to moralize that his high-spirited ward took as the concomitant of a completed life and as a test for her own sharp-aimed cajoleries. What made most unbearable Braceby's passion to kiss her mouth was the freedom he had to kiss her cheeks. This point was symbolic of his torture. Three years of comradeship had endeared him to Cherette. She loved him; it was her only love. And in a thousand pretty ways she showed it; it was her one field of non-musical demonstrativeness. She did not weary, even at eighteen, of her Daddie's knee and of the fond teasings which she knew how to direct against his composure while she was seated on his lap, her bare arms about his neck. And while she played and fondled, incarnate gaiety, poor Braceby was forever warding off his autumnal passion; constrained to sit still and act the father while every nerve in his body cried for crushing her in his arms and burning her against his lips.

The usage of romantic writers notwithstanding, all things have two sides—even emotions and even the emotion of love. Braceby adored Cherette, but he also hated her. His hate was the respite and the revenge of his starved passion. And it made his life still more insufferable. A mute, blind resentment surged, at times, against the innocent subject of his agony and the innocent object of his love. Tortured nature, its own victim, gave sinister voice to the right of hunger and the need of escape. If Braceby lay burning in his bed, battling the need to pour out his heart and to overwhelm with a life's

tenderness the young, delicious creature who lay in the adjoining room, he had also to repress the will to be rid of his cross and to crush out what his tenderness dared not absorb.

VI

They went walking one day.

"Daddie," said Chérètte, close to him and looking directly up into his eyes, "Why don't you want to go to the Bird-cage any more? We've not been there since last year."

Braceby pushed forward the blue bonnet which had fallen over her back. His fingers caressed her hair and his lips smiled. For the first time the girl caught a tinge of pathos beneath his gentleness.

"Why, Daddie!" she said and stopped.

Braceby took her upturned face in his hands and bent down for a kiss. He felt that he was not going to kiss her cheek—or her forehead. It was so easy; her lips were so near. And a youthful smile played so protectingly upon them. It would be safe—a quick kiss. That smile of childhood would ward off his passion and her response. He might even find solace in her cool taking of his embrace—a cure, indeed. Had he not perhaps whipped his craving with this too Quixotic denial? A sip sometimes quenches thirst which in parched abstinence seems insatiate. After all, what poison could be gleaned from this chaste fount? Was she not his daughter? Bah! His passion was the fever of starvation. With the taste he had all claims to, it would fade to a mere righteous fondness. On, then—to spite this gnawing, fearful hunger with a nibble. He put forth his lips. And then, their eyes met, really.

If there is a Heaven for heroic deeds—if Braceby's life up to that moment had been composed of whinings and betrayals—for that moment, that Heaven would have been assured him.

"Let's visit the Bird-cage."

They trudged on. His lips had touched her forehead and from her, somehow, managed to glean a smile. That it was a passable smile, Chérètte proved amply by her prompt forgetting that she had, a moment before, been vaguely conscious of its faintness. The last lap toward their embowered goal they traversed running—Chérètte in the fore, singing and leaping and laughing, and Braceby after, puffing and grim—a sad, autumnal man!

But there was sure to be an end—the most natural of all ends. Braceby, in mortal conflict for all these harsh years, with this fresh

birth of Spring in his sclerotic arteries, was to fall finally into the master delusion that he was still as young as his passion—that the folly of youth was identical with youth itself. The persuasion of the blood had been accomplished so gradually and so insidiously that he was scarcely aware of its stages. At forty he had dismissed his youth, at forty-five he had said good-bye to women, now, at the brink of fifty, he was suddenly consumed by a boundless love for this girl of nineteen. The period of mocking struggle which had preceded was gone from his consciousness as the *Sturm und Drang* fades in a young man's mind before the vision of his innamorata. He remembered the reasons which had plunged him into war against love, but he saw them now as dead and empty, and he forgot their force and appositeness in the fever of his new passion.

But until such time as he should tell all, Braceby decided to continue in the fatherly rôle of the past four years. And having put a term to the part which had caused him such unutterable suffering, the pain of keeping it went out and so pleasurable did it become in the anticipation of being free of it that he almost swerved in his resolve. He learned quickly, however, in that vague wavering, that the old state was dependent for its pleasantness upon his knowledge that it was a doomed state. So his decision to speak returned to stay.

The day he had long set for his hazardous proposal was that of his fiftieth anniversary. A desire to clinch his youth at the half-century mark was behind this choice, although Braceby was unaware of it. In his mind the resolution had been a sentimental one—the bestowal upon himself of a gift worthy of what he deemed his real advent into life. The dramatic relevance of the date attracted him, although he did not realize of what deep stuff the drama was. To him, it seemed a point in romantic comedy—an apposite first act. To the gods, it may have appeared otherwise. But Braceby was thoughtless of any otherwise. And his heedlessness was the strongest triumph of his will. He had fixed a date for his proposal because he knew that he would never rise to the climax unless he thus compelled it with a dogmatic impulse. And if he had thus chosen a day of conventional rejoicing in which to cast his die, it was to preclude any sneaking hint that there might perhaps be no cause for rejoicing after all. Braceby refused admittance to the thought of a refusal. And in his need for encouragement and for conviction, he did as men have always done—he buttressed up his resolution with a ritual, and he knocked down his doubts with starvation.

Excitement on that climacteric morning had kept him wide-eyed in bed for several hours. And then had come a heavy, violent slumber, that seemed to grapple and possess him, and which, after appeasement of its passion, flung him to consciousness with the late morning sun hot upon his face. Braceby woke with the blood surging in his body and his head cool and clear. All the time of that pulsing sleep he had been preparing and enacting a dream. And when, at last, he was hurled back into consciousness, it was upon no middle station—no yawning, limb-stretching compromise between the trance of night and the labor of day. Nor was it with his mind bathed in the misgivings, half timid, half febrile, of the foregone evening. The brewings of that deep slumber had been both mental and physical. They had restored the steely quickness of youth to his body and engendered a defeat-ignoring confidence in his mind. Braceby jumped exultant from his covers. He stood long in the open window and allowed the May sun to pour its liquors of optimism upon his body. And then, he plunged into his icy bath. There had been a long and salutary way since that false surrender to old-age when Braceby had ordered his valet to leave closed the windows in his bedroom. A not too fastidious preparation followed, and now—he was on the stairs.

VII

Cherette was practicing in the living-room. The sun, glowing through the cretonne curtains of three French windows, advanced over the low-raftered chamber and touched her shoulders. She was clad in a light-blue jumper, caught in over her still boyish hips with a broad sash of a darker tint. The dress fell loosely from about her neck; and the sun beamed its last breath upon the slight disclosure of her back, whose curve it transformed into a gentle harmony of rose lights and blue shadings. The girl's fingers went over the keys with a faint suggestion of lingering longer than the *tempo* warranted. Her head was forward to one side and her eyes tilted up. In their distant gaze shone a sensuous satisfaction for the sun's caress, of which she was aware—subtly, amorously—as if it had been the worshipful glance of a lover. It is through such fair delusions as this—the dreaming of the sun's rays to be a wooer's eyes, the reading of a declaration into the low song of an evening glade—that girls prepare for their first love encounters and learn to take them with the canny knowledge that to men seems mystical.

Braceby stood on the landing and watched. Cherette looked up to him and smiled. "Good morning, Daddie." She stopped to rise.

"Finish your piece," said Braceby.

Cherette went on, tossing her head with the sustained *Andante*. It was a different playing, now: the vivid playing before an audience. And as Braceby stood there, listening, he understood the luxurious completeness of this girl in her own life, the ease with which, in four years' space, she had absorbed all of his thoughts and all of his surroundings, and, with youth's direct assurance, made them singly and ineradicably hers. In her acts and in her air there seemed no memory of a time prior to her being here. The house and all that was within it, he and all that surged within him, had accepted her and become stamped with her. With what tacit grace she had moulded his world and attuned it to herself. How insidiously it had become a whole of which she was the heart; how perfectly her spirit had shot him through, in his present and in his past. Verily, it was as if she had been there, all of his days; and as if days had not been her measure. And now, at length, this harmony was to reach consummation. The last reserve, the last holding-off, was to be effaced. The deluded man swam in ecstasy. All of his soul had grown contiguous to this little, playing stranger. The very chairs gave forth the incense of her presence; and the trees that stooped over the wide piazza were murmurous, through the open casements, of the sweet, troubled years of their communion. It was a compelling rhythm.

The breakfast table was cleared; Cook and the man-servant had caught a train upon Braceby's gift of a day off. The couple sat by the fireplace and Braceby gleaned comfort from the silent room. He had managed with no difficulty to keep the date of his birthday a secret. They were going to lunch in the city. And now Cherette sat ensconced in her high-backed chair, kicking the cushion below her feet, toying with her necklace of tiny pearls.

Braceby invited her to a quiet talk. Nor was Cherette loth. Such talks, however serious at their outset, were always jolly. She had a way of swerving them to express and to attain what new fancy happened to possess her fancy-ridden heart. At the end of the hour the girl had coaxed the promise that they were to lunch at a particularly fashionable restaurant for which Cherette had an evil predilection and which Braceby sought to avoid, like all his former haunts. And that was all. No word of the proposal. And a third of the appointed day was over.

They sat in the open car and watched the monotonous landscape whip past them. Braceby reasoned that the task was not a morning's one. Something in the crisp, Spring-suffused air seemed to hint a rebuke to his resolution. There was an advantage in star-drenched darkness. The sun seemed ironical, that day: a stubborn ally to the old order against the new.

It was a sumptuous luncheon—since Braceby ordered it. And it was followed by a visit to the Bronx Zoo. Cherette loved wild animals, even as she had a contempt for domestic ones. She welled a secret strain of sentiment from the sight of caged lions and space-tortured elephants. And Braceby followed, mournfully hugging his endeavor, watching the sun sink under a bank of violet-green trees and welcoming the long shadows on the sylvan walks. And so another third was gone of the appointed day. Braceby asserted his authority in order to avoid dining in town and they had a cozy late feast in their home.

And now, they were on their porch and the night was in league with Braceby, even as had been the day against him. Throughout the entire wracking trip the man had sensed a conflict. Despite himself and his convictions, he could not but feel that if the serene light of the May sun was against him—and the strained conventionalism of the restaurant, and the subtle crowd-instinct of the part—they had been in favor of Cherette. And still, what he was about to do was not against his charge. Whence came this seeming antagonism, this pitting of interests against each other? Braceby could not grasp the source, so he dismissed the fact. There was no such conflict. What he was about to ask was for Cherette as well as for himself. . . .

"Cherette, I wonder if you know how I love you," he said, his voice atremble.

The girl's smile came to him, suffused with the night.

"Of course I do, Daddie."

"Do you love to call me Daddie?"

"Why, what else could I call you?"

He took her hand and kissed it—a moment too long. For Cherette withdrew it. It was the pinch of resistance necessary to compound his passion and send it plunging toward its goal, with the power of a pent-up life load, seeking its level. Braceby was to his feet and the shoulders of the girl he loved were between his hands.

"Look here," he cried, "there is something else you could call me. . . . Oh, don't you understand, Cherette? Dear little, adored Cherette. I love you—I love you."

There was a pause. A dry branch cracked from a distant tree and fell dead to the brush. The rustle of its fall was caught up in a myriad symphony of forest-life—a minute veil of sound shot through with the glowing pall of the receding woodland. And above it, rose the hot breathing of Thomas Braceby. He pressed her thin shoulders as in a vice. He refused to look down at the bewildered, canny eyes that were prepared to pierce him with their infernal irony, he wet his lips and he dashed on. And as he talked, the slowness and the measure of his words amazed the passion of his heart.

"Cherette, my darling. It hurts me—for years, it has hurt me to hear you call me *that*. It has been torture. At first it was well. That was how I loved you then. But when I came to know you, it all changed suddenly, Cherette. And for long, I have loved you in a far deeper, far greater way. And now I can stand it no longer. I am not an old man, little girl. Never have I loved before—really, wholeheartedly—as I love you. Doesn't that make me young? What else is youth but that? See, we both stand at the same threshold—the first love. I have known women of all sorts—girls and those who were as if they never had been girls. But what have they given me? Bitterness! What have they taught me? Merely to appreciate you, to know how rare and how sublime this love is that I have for you. All else—it has but gone to prove how real, how enduring, how unbearably deep is my need of you."

He loosed her shoulders and his fists clenched in a moment's agony. And now, he bent more closely. "Is what I ask not natural? You will find me young, you will find me a real lover. For what else could you find me, since that is All—All I have become? Everything in my life that is not you has died away. I am re-awakened, no—for the first time, I am awake. I stand on a threshold. Let me in, Cherette. Say that you love me. Say that you understand."

But again there was silence. A bird carolled in the gloom and a motor went slashing through the stillness on the distant Post-road. Braceby sank down before her. His knees were not stiff and he was reckless of a damp floor. Above all, he feared this silence. It seemed to scathe and cut and there was a smile within it, as if it had been a human face. He feared to look up, lest he should find that it was the face of Cherette that had a smile. He went on, more measured of voice, more quaking of soul.

"Cherette, don't give me your answer now, if you don't care to. Above all, don't say No. If you could only feel what your Yes would

mean to me! And I can make you happy—happier, beloved. Otherwise, you would have to leave me, some day. You would find that you were not completely happy; that there was something lacking—another sort of love. Give me that! Let me give you that. Oh, if you knew what it was like, after so long a wait, to find one's desire so near and not to dare to grasp it. You are so perfect, so beautiful! And all I have—beside the grosser things—is this love, strong for a lifetime of preparation. It will transform all, Chérètte, even as it has transfigured me. Give me a chance. Become my wife!"

He held her knees in his palsied hands. His tears stained her dress. His mouth begged her hands. He loved her. And the bird ceased its gossip. And the sibilant live things of the forest were murmurously still.

Chérètte jumped from her chair; violently so that her knee struck Braceby's lip and made it bleed.

"You old fool!" she said, standing over him.

He saw her eyes. They were laughing. They were very old and very sharp. They seemed to curl up within themselves and from their immemorial retreat to dart forth a biting harmony of frost and flame. They had nothing to do with Chérètte. It seemed they, rather than she, that spoke.

"Why—you're old enough to be my father. For all I know, and for all you know—" Braceby felt what was coming—felt it in the pervasive cut of pain that went through his body. And he trembled to avert it. He was helpless. The words were uttered. "—for all you know, and for all I know, you may *be* my father."

VIII

Chérètte was gone. All that was left was a certain light, world-withering laugh that never had been uttered. Yet, that was all that was to stay. And that was never to be gone.

Braceby raved in his mind and writhed in his body. He wanted to protest; he wanted to cry out; he wanted to be taken back as a father. He caressed the name of "Daddie." He spat out at his fatal burst of madness which, surging over the flooddykes, had in the moment of its ecstatic triumph sunk to nothingness on the farther side of the world. A thousand pleas and a thousand resolutions played havoc in his heart. And no sign came forth from all the bitter, inner seething.

An hour later, he found himself still kneeling on the lone verandah.

His knees were stiff with aching; and the floor was soaked with the damp gall of the night.

He rose and crawled into his bed.

And the windows in his room stayed shut.

THE FIRE IS OUT IN ACHERON

*by Maxwell Anderson**

The fire is out in Acheron,

And where it burned the centuries
Have swept in loam, and set thereon
A grove of lime and laurel trees.

And all the gods to whom we turned
With prayer and grief and dulcimer
Lie fallen, broken and unurned,
With Proserpine and Lucifer.

The woods are dark; the dark is still;
The dancers tremble at a breath;
And they will tire of their own will
And puzzle over love and death,

And snatch a terror from afar,
A horror from the misted fen,
And, frightened by a falling star,
Dig up the sunken gods again.

* Mr. Anderson's first conspicuous success was *What Price Glory*, a play written in collaboration with Laurence Stallings. He has since written *Mary Queen of Scots* and other well-known plays and motion pictures in his own right.

A HUMORESQUE IN HAM

by Ben Hecht*

I

THE name of Jim Sloan was powerful in Chicago. There was a certain familiar magic to the ring of it. Just as the name of De Maupassant evoked for the people of Chicago visions of lacy bedrooms, and the name of Caesar visions of Ed. Pinaud's hair tonic, and the name of Père Marquette visions of a bad railroad, so was the name of Jim Sloan also potent in the evoking of visions. People spoke his name and thought not of him but of a ham, a large ham, shaped like a lopsided, inverted mandolin and labelled "*Sloan's Premium Ham—The Best.*"

This ham was Jim Sloan. To a few intimates there was a man who bore the name, who exercised himself in human activities, but to the people of Chicago there was no such person. There was only the ham. Outlined in electric lights this ham blazed above the night-hidden roofs of State Street. It gestured in the crowded cars. It grimaced in the newspapers. Magazines were full of its potent contours. It hung in the windows of butcher shops.

For sixty-two years the name of Sloan had meant the lithograph of a ham. That many years ago Mike Sloan had started killing pigs out around Thirty-ninth and Halsted Streets. At first Mike Sloan had managed to kill only some ten or twelve pigs a day. But being a man of genius he had, in the course of time, risen to the height of killing 857 pigs a day. And thus, at the zenith of his career, he had died and been buried with all the pomp befitting the killer of 857 pigs every twenty-four hours. But the death of Mike Sloan had meant no respite for the pigs. To the contrary, Jim Sloan, his only son and inheritor of his wealth and genius, had leaped into the breach and upheld the family honor by taking the lives of 903 pigs every day of each year following Mike Sloan's interment.

Already the name of Sloan had become a ham. Now, after fifteen years, the ham had engraved itself on the consciousness of every nation

* Ben Hecht, collaborator with Charles MacArthur on the play, *The Front Page*, and author of "Erik Dorn" and other novels, short stories, and motion picture scenarios was a prolific contributor to *The Smart Set* under the editorship of Nathan and Mencken.

of the earth. Certain modern minds knew that Jim Sloan also killed cows and sheep and owned a large section of South Water Street wherein butter, eggs and vegetables were sold. They were aware of him as a series of huge, ramshackle buildings surrounded by pens full of animals and reeking with blood, hides and fats. But in a world given to superficial perceptions, such rare discernment was for the minority.

"Sloan's Premium Ham—The Best" remained Jim Sloan and Jim Sloan remained a being worshiped and admired by the proletariat as a succulent, juicy ham shaped like the map of Africa and purchasable in all corners of the earth.

In his office on the second floor of the James Sloan & Company plant, Jim Sloan sat at a flat-topped mahogany desk and stared out of a carefully washed window. It was early afternoon of a gloomy Spring day. A gray-mustached man appeared in the door of the office and said in a precise and respectful voice:

"Mr. Archer wants to see you, Mr. Sloan."

"Can't see him," said Jim Sloan.

The man in the door looked for an instant perplexed.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Sloan. It's the Archer from the Brimstone Ranch. I think he's finally come around. He's had a break with Armour's, and I think . . ."

"Can't see him, Wilson," said Jim Sloan, without removing his eyes from the window. "Tell him to come tomorrow. I've important things to attend to."

Wilson hesitated and then, with a faithful sigh, removed himself from the door.

Jim Sloan remained staring out of the window. He was a man of forty, groomed and barbered into a creature becoming the poise and affluence of his estate. There was about his solid features and his portly figure, likewise, the decisiveness and power which the consciousness of "Sloan's Premium Ham—The Best" had brought in fifteen years. Men who had known Mike Sloan proclaimed the son somewhat softer, somewhat less pugnacious than the father. Nevertheless they perceived in him the same sterling genius which had enabled the father to begin killing ten hogs a day and die with a record of 857.

Encasing himself in a gray, light overcoat, Jim Sloan moved from his office. His passage down the long corridor, nodding here and there to gray-haired employes who sat among the two hundred and eighty-four desks within the main office enclosure, created, as always, a stir among

the men and women bending over files, ledgers and letters. Although they saw him daily, Jim Sloan remained to them as aloof and unknown a creature as he was to the multitude which respected him in the name of a ham. They became conscious of themselves as a smear of atoms combining to complete the organism known as James Sloan & Company.

The odor of salt, freshly stripped hides, vats of blood and fats, enveloped Jim Sloan as he progressed down the broad steps of the red brick office building. In front of the door stood a clean and luxurious automobile. In this automobile Jim Sloan rode home.

For the first ten minutes the automobile bumped along over roads wet with the drippings from the carcass wagons. The sounds of a vast and orderly activity came to his ears. About him stretched a zigzagging world of wooden enclosures alive with silent, restless animals. Men in dirty white aprons and smeared overalls emerged suddenly from scores of gloomy doorways. Wagons piled high with the steaming semblance of cows, sheep and pigs crisscrossed in all directions. Overhead ran a network of wooden walks and the automobile was continually passing under puzzling and enormous scaffoldings.

But to Jim Sloan the scene was a curious blur, a familiar thing seen out of focus. His eyes took no account of the slaughter-houses and the pens, of the curving, trampled road. His nose apparently registered none of the flat, pungent and salty odors which hung, steam like, over the huge areas about him. His ears remained undisturbed by the clatter and shriek of the marvelous places in which 903 pigs were being put to the knife and 605 beef cattle adroitly tapped on the skull between each sunrise and each sunset. There was curious thought in Jim Sloan's brain and he remained lost in the elaboration of it as the automobile sped out of the rickety cross-streets on to the boulevard and spun leisurely northward towards Lake Shore Drive.

The sightseers, when they rode down Lake Shore Drive in the \$1 round trip carryalls, were always bidden by the enterprising assistant charioteer to "gaze, ladies and gentlemen, on your left. The mansion we are now passing is the home of James Sloan, the man who makes The Ham. In that wonderful house lives James Sloan himself, his wife and daughter, Elizabeth." As the carryall rumbled on, the sightseers turned their necks and allowed their eyes to linger with casual fascination upon the place. Visions of large and tempting hams drifted before them and a sense of the curious incongruity of life abided with them

as they bestowed their itinerant attention upon succeeding objects. The thought of "Sloan's Premium Ham—The Best" having a home, moving about within four walls and sleeping in a bed, offered this incongruity.

II

Jim Sloan entered his home on this gloomy spring day with an eager step. The stern and placid composure of his face gave way suddenly to a certain brightness of his eyes, a certain movement of his lips which made him appear younger and less important than the Jim Sloan who had walked down the corridor from his office. A servant materialized in the spacious, tapestry-hung hall of the Sloan home and assumed charge of Sloan's gray, light overcoat and hat. Rubbing his hands together and delivering himself of a cheerful cough, Jim Sloan walked hurriedly toward an open door.

The room which he entered was spacious and gray-walled. It had the air of being a chamber devoted to utter rarity and exclusiveness. It was the music-room of the Sloan home. It was a cheerless and magnificent *salle*, furnished with forbidding chairs and cabinets, and distinguished by the presence of a grand piano, five massively framed oil paintings of famous composers, a glass-covered case in which reposed an assortment of curious instruments, and a short, wiry-faced man who resembled a monk because of a peculiarly located bald spot, and whose name was Professor Enrico Sansone. Godowsky had played in this room. Grainger had sat before this grand piano. Paderewski and Josef Hofmann had looked out these long, shining windows at the stretch of lawn. Zimbalist and Kreisler, Ysaye and Heifetz had likewise trod these ivory-tinted and golden-gleaming carpets. And yet it was a room to make a musician like Enrico Sansone uncomfortable. Despite the massively framed portraits of Mozart, Beethoven, Schumann, Liszt and Wagner, there was no music in the room. Despite the ebony spread of the piano there was no hint of melody about the precincts.

Thus Professor Enrico Sansone turned with a fretful air. He spoke like one privileged to say things. He said:

"Ah, Mr. Slowan, you come late."

Jim Sloan nodded his head and smiled.

"It's all right, Professor," he answered. "I'll make it up by surprising you this time in another respect."

"Ver' well," said the professor. "To work!"

With another rub of his hands and a spontaneous clearing of his throat, Jim Sloan walked to a corner of the room and from one of the cabinets extracted a black leather violin case. From the case he brought forth a violin, after removing a brocaded velvet covering. It was a Cremona, low-chinned, full of garnet and russet shadings.

Professor Sansone, his hands thrust in his coat pockets, his legs apart, watched enigmatically the operations attending the tuning of the violin. As Sloan placed it under his chin and tucked his head to one side, the professor cried:

"No, no. The exercises first."

The look of an aggrieved boy passed over Jim Sloan's face.

"I would like to show you the *Légende*," he murmured.

"The exercises first," repeated Professor Sansone, "and then you can show me, Mr. Slowan."

With a grim air, the little Italian walked into a corner of the room, removed from the shadows an elaborately carved wooden music stand, placed it beside the piano and dressed it with a large green folio labeled "David's Violin Studies." Jim Sloan faced the stand and began the execution of a page arranged for the bewilderment of all violinists. For ten minutes the endless arpeggios continued, interrupted only by sudden exclamations of the professor. At their conclusion the little Italian became full of fury.

"What have you studied?" he cried. "It ees worse, ver' much worse. Your left hand is like a cow."

Jim Sloan winced at the word.

"But, professor," he remonstrated weakly.

"No, no, no. I tell you you must practise scales, exercises. The *Légende* ees nothing. Thees ees ever' thing. Play heem once more."

A glutton for punishment, Professor Sansone threw himself into one of the forbidding chairs and sat stoically silent as Jim Sloan went through the jarring double stops, the intricate and unharmonious passages of the two pages before him.

When he had finished the second time, the little Italian again arose, walked the length of the chamber, frowned upon the portrait of Wagner, and exclaimed:

"Your fingers are like a child. They have no power. Your wrist ees stiff. Your right arm ees cramp all the time."

Jim Sloan, holding the Cremona by its neck, looked appealingly at the little Italian.

"I've put in an hour a day," he explained.

"And what ees that?" cried Sansone. "One hour! Oh, God, one hour! How many hours you spend keeling pigs? If you wish to be violinist you cannot spend twelve hours keeling pigs and one hour keeling music. Oh, God! One hour!"

A look of poignant shame came into Sloan's face. He shifted uneasily on his feet and seemed at a loss for answer.

"I guess you're right," he finally said. "But I promise to make it two hours."

A grin spread the lips of the little Italian.

"The *Légende*," he commanded.

Professor Enrico Sansone sat staring out of the window of the Sloan mansion, his back turned upon Jim Sloan, the packer. The slow, melodious gusto of Wieniawski's little piece filled the gray room.

"It is not bad," Professor Sansone murmured to himself, "like an earnest boy. Too stiff, too slippery."

He continued listening with a frown as the music progressed.

Jim Sloan, standing beside the piano, let his soul run out of his fingers. It was not the soul of Jim Sloan, the meat packer, that came thus to the strings. It was rather a nebulous and awkward thing, which threw itself feverishly, if impotently, into the doublestop trio, which whinnied dolorously on the high E, which gurgled languorously on the low B. It was a soul which had never known the power of "Sloan's Premium Ham—The Best." It was a strange, frostbitten, crippled, spavined soul, airing itself in the unfamiliar luxury of song.

There was a Jim Sloan who bartered in South Water Street, who swung deals involving one million eggs, who sat smoking, swearing and spitting at directors' meetings, who fought and intrigued over pigs grunting obliviously in far places of the earth, who excited himself over shipping marines and international contracts, who, in short, was "Sloan's Premium Ham—The Best," vitalized. But a curious thing had happened to that Jim Sloan.

Unrest had fought its way through the labyrinth of pig pens and office corridors into his heart. Mike Sloan had found no time for unrest. Mike had exhausted his genius enthroning himself behind 857 dead pigs a day. Not so Jim, his son. The slaughter-house was no longer the battle-ground for undiluted energies in the Sloan & Company plant. Efficiency had removed Jim Sloan further and further from the stress of actual conflict. It was as if 903 pigs came into his life daily and com-

mitted suicide. He signed documents for their disposal. He negotiated sterile though impressive contracts. He became bustlingly idle, pompously abstract. He began to feel ennuied at thirty-five. His wife and daughter, moving in state from capital to capital, graced his vision two months out of the year. For two months he buried himself in distracting leisure among men who danced and gambled, and women who maintained a mysterious excitement in their lives.

It was at a concert five years ago at one of his summer homes that Jim Sloan had discovered his soul. From some hidden and incongruous depths of his being had been suddenly liberated a desire to make music. Since that day he had, like a man conducting an awkward liaison, given himself to a secret dream. Daily Jim Sloan, the meat packer, had become more and more of a husk, and Jim Sloan who sat enraptured at concerts, who sawed on his Cremona in his empty house, who aspired to things he dared not even name to himself, became the reality.

Standing now playing the *Légende*, he was conscious of a curious warmth in his body. Lost in the sweet intensity that music making brought to him, he remained unaware of the flatted tremolos that issued into the room, of the slurred cadenza that deepened the frown on Professor Sansone's face. With an amorousness which rendered him almost grotesque, he gave himself over to the production of sound. He finished and stood flushed and silent, regarding the back of the little Italian.

Professor Sansone, turning, hesitated a moment. In the eyes of his pupil he saw a light which confused him.

"That ees ver' fine," he whispered.

Jim Sloan laughed softly.

"I thought you'd like it," he said. Both men became silent. At last Sloan resumed.

"Tell me candidly, Professor, what are my chances?"

"Chances?" murmured Sansone. "There ees no such thing as chances. Practise, Mr. Slowan. That ees all which make perfec'."

"I mean," said Sloan slowly, "have I got it in me? Is there any hope of my becoming . . . becoming a . . ."

Jim Sloan paused and drew a deep breath.

"Becoming . . . becoming," cried the professor abruptly. "What ees it you wish to become? If you practise you become able to play the violin. Ees that not enough?"

As his pupil remained silent, Professor Sansone bethought himself

suddenly of the \$40 he received for each hour spent in the Sloan mansion, and a kindly smile lighted his wiry face.

"Ah, Mr. Slowan," he added, "if you started to play as a boy you would now be one great violinist. But you start late and who knows? Perhaps in five more years, perhaps in seven, you will be an artist. You have it in you, Mr. Slowan."

III

None of the people who saw and knew Jim Sloan had ever suspected his devotion to violin playing, had ever imagined for an instant that he was other than a quietly domineering force in the finances of the western world. Through this world which knew him as the shrewd and compelling dealer in cattle, grain and produce, Jim Sloan moved, thinking intently of passages from serenades and concertos, going over in his mind the fingering of curiously contrived exercises. His dream seemed in no way to impair his efficiency as head of Sloan & Company. With a cunning almost automatic, he indited letters, oversaw reports, made suggestions, attended conferences.

Jim Sloan's ambition to play the violin was in the beginning devoid of any desire to achieve public recognition as an artist. It was at the outset no more than a dogged and mechanical longing to master an unknown field, just as Mike, his revered parent, and founder of the Premium Ham, had mastered the then chartless field of wholesale slaughter. But as the years progressed, Jim Sloan's preoccupation with his new and intriguing craft became confused with disturbing fancies. At night he lay awake in his soft bed visioning himself upon a stage, him and his violin. He saw himself as an arresting figure of genius, as a virtuoso whose name inspired awe in the minds of men. True to his promise to Sansone, he increased his daily practise to two hours. The little Italian, calling twice a week at the Sloan mansion, saw developing under his tutelage one of those tragedies of misplaced effort which to a great teacher is like unto crowns of thorns.

It was at the close of one of his lessons late that spring that Jim Sloan first heard the curious name of Slovel Selzow. The little Italian, after much frowning, spoke it.

"There ees a boy who work in your company," he said, "by name Slovel Selzow, a Lithuanian. Have you heard of heem?"

Jim Sloan smiled, bethinking himself suddenly of some two thousand creatures who might or might not bear the name of Slovel Selzow.

"No," he said.

"Too bad," Sansone exclaimed. "He ees one great violin player."

"Is that so?" inquired Jim Sloan carelessly.

"It ees," snapped the little Italian. "And because he have no money to learn, this great artist must keel pigs."

A frown passed over Sloan's face. There was in the Italian's voice something which penetrated the placid indifference he had always held toward the toilers who brought into the world "Sloan's Premium Ham—The Best."

"I give heem one lesson now and then," Sansone went on, "but I cannot afford ver' often. And he can come only on Sunday when he ees not at work, keeling pigs."

"A Lithuanian butcher who plays the violin," mused Jim Sloan, "would be interesting."

Five years ago Jim Sloan might have, with certain magnificent gestures, scribbled a check which would have insured the future of Slovel Selzow, killer of pigs. This afternoon he remained staring with narrowed eyes out of the window of the music-room. After a pause he spoke slowly:

"I know what you expect, Professor. But I am not a philanthropist. If this pig killer is a genius let him be one. We're both in the same boat, he and I. He hasn't any more to contend with, killing pigs, than I have running the plant. I'm asking help from no one."

"You," began Enrico Sansone and stopped. Jim Sloan caught the word and the tone of it.

"How old is this violinist?" he asked brusquely.

"Twenty year old," said Sansone, recovering his calm.

"Twenty years old, eh? And a genius? Well, Professor, if he shows himself a good killer of pigs I'll promote him to a dresser. I'm not employing violinists."

This somewhat slight conversation marked a strange turning point in Jim Sloan's life. The name Slovel Selzow somehow stuck in his imaginings. With it the tone of the professor remained. As he passed down the lumpy, worn road of Packingtown to the office of the Sloan plant the next day, he eyed the ramshackle and monstrous buildings in which animals were suffering death and dismemberment with an odd sensation of interest. Within one of them worked this Slovel Selzow. Several young men emerged from the doorways and hurried in their

overalls and aprons across the road. Any of them might be Selzow, he thought, watching them as the automobile in which he was riding bore him serenely forward.

There was something about the idea of a young Lithuanian pig killer aspiring to be an artist of the violin that exercised a fascination over Jim Sloan's thought, as he moved through the routine of his work that day. For a number of succeeding days the idea abided with him.

At first he thought only of Slovel Selzow with an impersonal speculation. He pictured him standing on the blood-soaked platform, knife in hand. He pictured the huge wheel revolving like some monstrous rack with four pigs always dangling by their hind feet from as many projections. It was the duty of the killer of pigs to slash their throats as they revolved slowly. He pictured Slovel Selzow doing this mechanically callous thing. And when he had done with his impersonal picturings, the words of Professor Sansone would come to his thought.

"... this great artist must keel pigs!"

In the course of two weeks Slovel Selzow became an inspiration to Jim Sloan. No longer was there anything impersonal about the Lithuanian pig killer. Logical in the presence of his friends, always shrewd and controlled in the society of his fellow men, Jim Sloan reserved for his secret and dream world the caprice of an infant. Things which came into this world, little things of utter unimportance, uncentered him more than the most strategic difficulties which came before him at his desk in the Sloan plant. Thus Slovel Selzow, whom he had never seen, suddenly acquired for Jim Sloan the depressing characteristics of some violent rival.

Inspired by this notion, he telegraphed his wife that he would not have time to spend two months this year at their summer home. He would show Slovel Selzow who was the greater genius. He would reveal this matter to Sansone. He would, above all, make certain of it to himself. There could be no half measures. He thought with elation of the eight-hour day which all faithful killers of pigs were forced to put in at the Sloan plant. The work was tiring. Slovel Selzow could not survive it. Yet it was no more demanding than his own work.

These were the almost grotesque cogitations which darkened Jim Sloan's brow during the early days of summer and which kindled in his eye exultant lights. Professor Sansone was the first to notice the change which had overtaken the famous packer. Instead of an en-

thusiastic dilettante, the good professor found suddenly on his hands a creature consecrated heart and soul to some strangely pathetic ideal. The half-hearted technique, which his pupil had been wont to exhibit in the rendition of the finger exercises, was replaced now by a desperate attention to detail, an arresting fidelity to bowing and the sliding of the wrist. A certain improvement was achieved. But, sitting one day late in summer in the familiar music-room, listening to his pupil execute a Viotti concerto, Sansone mused sadly upon the oddities of life.

"He is impossible," he murmured to himself. "He has no soul. No fire. Why does a man without soul or fire seek to play the violin? He is like a fat baby. He is no good. God, what a waste of time, what a waste of money! What a waste of ambition! And Slovel must kill pigs six days a week. Yet Slovel is a genius. I must make the boy an artist. Six months and he will be ready. This fat baby could play sixty years and not create a note."

Aloud, when Jim Sloan had finished, he said:

"Ah, Mr. Slowan, you are working hard. There is improvement. It ees fine."

Jim Sloan smiled with grimness. He understood, in some crevice of his brain, the antagonism which Sansone cherished toward him. To the professor he, Jim Sloan, was a brash and insolent interloper, a pork butcher de luxe invading with dripping boots the fields of art. Sansone was necessary, however. He was the best teacher in the country. And he, Jim Sloan, needed no further inspiration than the peculiar hate which had sprung up in his heart.

For Jim Sloan had reached the final altitude of hate. He had achieved an enemy with whom he had hourly to contend. The enemy was Slovel Selzow. By a series of distorted and bizarre imaginings Slovel Selzow had grown to Sloan to embody the mockery of fate—a phrase which he left unexplained. He reasoned only that he would not permit a Lithuanian butcher to surpass him playing the violin. Hour after hour he harassed the echoes with page upon page of Kreutzer and David, De Beriot and Viotti. For the two months of his usual vacation, Jim Sloan absented himself from his huge business and, closeted five hours a day in the music-room, pursued his monomania, his driving ambition, his determination to become now a great and overwhelming master of the violin.

IV

Professor Enrico Sansone had never mentioned the name of Slovel Selzow to Jim Sloan after their first talk of him. It was thus through the medium of an artistic lithograph inserted within one of the glass cases in the lobby of Orchestra Hall that Jim Sloan first learned of the great event. The lithograph eyed by Sloan as he was emerging one evening from a symphony concert, accompanied by two friends, revealed the face of a young man with a shock of uncombed hair and the pronounced features of a Slav. Above and beneath the face was printed:

Prof. Enrico Sansone

Presents

SLOVEL SELZOW

in a Violin Recital

September 23

When he had quitted his friends, who chanced to be social acquaintances of his wife, Jim Sloan walked bewilderedly past his home. He had dismissed his chauffeur. He walked now along the lake front, a sharp, gloomy wind sweeping him from the water. As he walked a furious emotion confused him. He had failed. Sansone had not bidden him to give a recital, to make a *début*. Sansone had played with him for the few dollars there was in it. Slovel Selzow, the enemy, the creature who killed pigs and stood covered with blood on a platform eight hours a day, was to come into his own as an artist. He, Jim Sloan, was to remain as a butcher *de luxe*.

As always, the situation presented itself to him with neither lucidity of thought nor analysis. His pride now, as he walked, choked him. The night was a tempestuous, wounded thing to him. The gloom of it on the water was like the gloom in his soul. The wind sweeping him was like the aimless wildness of his thought. Gradually Slovel Selzow outlined himself before him as a man who had stolen from him his dreams, robbed him of something fearsomely precious.

That night as he lay in his bed Jim Sloan wept, "Sloan's Premium Ham—The Best" wept because it could not play the violin as well as a Lithuanian butcher boy. During the month that preceded the concert Sloan never touched the Cremona. It lay gathering dust and uncovered on the piano where he had thrust it one evening. The 23d of September became for him a day of dark forebodings. He thought of it as of some hideous climax to his life.

At his desk Jim Sloan was the silent, imperturbable chief he had always been. As by some last mockery of fate, the business of the Sloan plant expanded during the month. A meeting of directors yielded a dividend more luscious than any in the history of the institution. Jim Sloan, glowering and domineering, recalling in this exaggerated guise of his the contours and manners of his parent, Mike, presided at this meeting, made a brief address concerning his satisfaction in the matter, and returned to his empty home that night thinking blackly of a Lithuanian named Slovel Selzow. A letter from his wife, awaiting him, served only to increase the darkness in his heart. In the letter were ridiculous sentences concerning tardy trains and unsatisfactory hotels and banal personages encountered in London. He tore it up and shoved the pieces in his pocket. The 23d of September was a week off.

The people in Chicago who attended concerts had cultivated a faith in Enrico Sansone. He had in the past revealed to them notable performers. Like Campanini, he was one of the rallying points of dinner conversation and one of the boasts of the élite. Thus on the night of the 23d Orchestra Hall was well filled. Professor Sansone had announced in an interview published in all the music columns that he would stake his reputation on the genius of this, his latest find.

A flutter of applause greeted Slovel Selzow as he walked stiffly out of the wings and took his position to the left of the piano. He was a tall, stocky youth with a large head. He played a Beethoven concerto.

Through the spaces of the hall which had stirred to the echoes of Thomas and Bull, of Joachim and Ysaye, of Wieniawski and Wilhelmj, throbbed the music of a new master. Clear and resonant, possessed of a strange urge and a stranger repression, tone poured from Slovel Selzow's violin. For moments it was the sound of seraphim singing shrilly at the feet of God, for moments it was the *passionata* of abandoned souls. But always, clear and possessed, the music reared and plunged against the hearts of the silent listeners. There were groups of violinists in the audience. These sat with heads lowered, listening to their dreams embodied in sound, perceiving their ambitions issuing from the strings of the violin on the stage.

When it was over a demonstration occurred seldom witnessed in the famous hall. Men and women leaped to their feet and cheered. Others cried:

"Selzow . . . Selzow! Encore!"

On the wave of this tumult which filled the auditorium, the name of

Slovel Selzow swept triumphantly into the world. The boy who had stood on the platform in the slaughter-house sticking four pigs in the throat every ten minutes became an idol at whose feet the world rushed to lay its love and worship.

The door of the hall opened and a single man emerged. The tumult was still at its height. The cries of "Encore! Encore!" were still rising. Jim Sloan walked through the lighted and deserted lobby and into the avenue. People who did not know Slovel Selzow was playing the violin that night were passing in the avenue. Jim Sloan joined them. He had left his light overcoat behind. He walked with his hat in his hand for a space and then automatically placed it on his head.

A curious fever burned in Jim Sloan's blood. He had heard Slovel Selzow play. He raised his eyes to the night. He had walked out of the avenue into the narrow parkway which skirted the lake on the Drive in which he lived. Standing above the water, the wind pressed against him and toppled his hat from his head. His emotions were unaccountable. A pain throbbed in his heart and the sound of Slovel Selzow's playing uncoiled in his brain like threads of fire. From his eyes came tears. For moments he stood facing the night-hidden water. Then he turned and with eyes raised still, gazed at the sky blurred with yellow, which covered the streets behind him. High against the night, outlined in a brilliant necklace of electric bulbs, he saw, blazing above the roof tops, the effulgent and triumphant sign,

Sloan's Premium Ham—The Best

Buy It Now!

A block away a street-organ was playing "The Justine Johnstone Glide." Jim Sloan looked into the water. For several minutes he was immovable. Then, shrugging his shoulders, he turned upon his heel and started slowly home. . . .

RÉPÉTITION GÉNÉRALE

by George Jean Nathan

THE Technique of Amour.—One of the most fecund and persistent myths of amour is that which maintains that a man, once he is taken with a woman, is intrigued in the degree that she affects indifference toward him. The truth, of course, is that while such indifference, whether honest or assumed, may actually contrive to keep him stepping lively for a short spurt, it very soon thereafter causes him suddenly to halt and get out of the race altogether. The clever woman, desiring to ensnare a man, realizes that the best way to get him is to throw away all the traditional feminine weapons and subterfuges and frankly and openly, yet charmingly, tell him that she likes him. The man thus handled, all folk-lore to the contrary, is won—and absolutely. The indifference tactic may in the end achieve some vagrom boob, but it has never yet in the history of the world gained for a woman a single desirable, first-rate man.

The American Credo.—The doctrine that a man like Charley Schwab, who has made a great success of the steel business, could in the same way easily have become a great composer like Bach or Beethoven had he been minded thus to devote his talents.

The doctrine that something mysterious goes on in the rooms back of chop suey restaurants.

The doctrine that all sailors are gifted with an extraordinary propensity for amour, but that on their first night of shore leave they hang around the water-front saloons and are given knock-out drops.

The doctrine that a napkin is always wrapped around a champagne bottle for the purpose of hiding the label, and that the quality of the champagne may be judged by the amount of noise the cork makes when it is popped.

The theory that because a married woman remains loyal to her husband she loves him.

The doctrine that a man's stability in the community and reliability in business may be measured by the number of children he has.

The feminine social theory that going to a fancy dress ball rigged up as a Peruvian street-sweeper makes a man feel vastly Parisian.

The doctrine that it is inconceivable that a man and woman entering a hotel without baggage after 10 p.m. may be married.

The theory that all country girls have clear, fresh, rosy complexions.

3

Fraternité.—A club is an institution whose café and dining-room tables seat at least two members too many.

4

La Voix d'Or.—That a rich low speaking voice generally bespeaks generations of cultural breeding and background is one of the commonest of American-held social fallacies. The so-called rich low speaking voice is found in America to be regularly less the inheritance of aristocracy than the inheritance of an engagement in "The Lady of Lyons," a medical specialization in women's diseases, or a waiting on table in a first-class restaurant. The speaking voice of Mrs. Goelet is infinitely less "aristocratic" than that of a third-rate Broadway actress. The speaking voice of Hamilton Fish, compared with that of a Ritz headwaiter, sounds like a foghorn.

5

The American Woman.—However charming the American woman, there is about her always one thing that keeps that charm from true perfection. Unlike the French woman, she is unable to flirt with two men at the same time without causing one of the men to regard her as being just a trifle vulgar.

6

Definition.—Humour: the truth with a bun on.

7

Definition.—Epigram: a truth spoken by a liar.

8

The Professor.—One of the cardinal rules preached and insisted upon by the doctors of playwriting is that no play can possibly succeed and prosper if its ending is not precisely that ending—whether "happy"

or "unhappy"—for which the audience has been made to hope. "Peter Pan," with its audience invariably disappointed in the hope that Peter may remain forever with the youngsters the audience has been drawn to love, was the late Charles Frohman's meal ticket, has made a fortune for Maude Adams and J. M. Barrie, has brought a thousand dollars a week for the St. Louis, Missouri, stock rights, and has thus far been vainly sought from Barrie by eager moving picture impresarios on a bid of \$200,000.

9

Grand Prix.—Not long ago I ventured an opinion that there are probably not more than one or two persons in the whole United States who know Little Eva's last name. I now hang up a prize of one round-fare ticket to Brooklyn, with stop-over privileges, for anyone who knows who wrote "The Black Crook," or for anyone who recalls the plot of "The Black Huzzar," or for anyone who knows (or cares) what the D. in John D. Rockefeller stands for, or for anyone who, on his word of honour, will swear that he has ever, at any time, read a whole newspaper.

10

The Worst of Novels.—The most overestimated book in the world, at least in prose, is probably Balzac's "Père Goriot." It contains one memorable phrase: the rest is almost pure piffle. I often suspect that old Honoré wrote it ironically—that is, to poke fun at Goriot. Whatever the truth, he certainly managed to make Goriot a tedious and irritating donkey. One sympathizes with his daughters throughout, as one sympathizes with Simon Legree in "Uncle Tom's Cabin."

11

The Insidious Telephone.—When the estimable M. Bell conceived the idea for the telephone, little did the good old soul reckon that it would turn out, in time, to be an innocent and unwitting agent in the dealing of the deuce to the young female of the species. That, more than any other thing, the telephone has been instrumental in bringing the young woman of today to a point where her grandmother wouldn't recognize her, that it is in no little degree responsible for her increasingly loose manners and looser habits, any mother who takes the time to analyze the situation will doubtless agree.

Before the introduction of the telephone into general family use, the

young girl of the house, meeting her young man in the paternal parlour, was naturally subject to the nervousness, shyness, bashfulness, etc., common on such occasions to nine well-bred young women out of every ten. After weeks of such conferences the friendship of the twain would progress so far as the hand-holding stage; after months, so far as the first kiss; after a year or two, probably so far as the proposal of marriage. The great barriers to intimacy that modesty, awkwardness and personal idiosyncrasy and reserve always throw up operated here; and our mothers thus took so long to bring our fathers around with the ring that we children, as yet unborn and so comprehending the drollery of love, almost gave up in despair our chances of ever seeing the Ziegfeld "Follies" and Ernest Poole initiated into an American Institute of Arts and Letters.

These barriers the telephone gradually did away with, broke down. It is not so easy—nor so safe—to look a man in the eye and tell him to go to hell as it is to drop a nickel in a slot at 206th Street, call up Rector ten miles away, and then do it. Similarly, it is not so easy for a flapper to sit next a man on a sofa, and, without blushing, tell him to press his ruby lips to hers. The telephone gives the flapper courage—and more. It conceals blushes; it gives the strength that is always afforded by remoteness: it removes, in a sense, the personal equation. It permits a girl to lie in her bed and talk with a man lying in *his* bed; it permits her, half-clothed, to talk with him a moment after its ring has made him hop out of his bathtub. Its delicate suggestiveness is not lost in these instances. Its whisper is the whisper of the clandestine note of the 1870's hidden in the hole of the old oak; its voice is the voice of the chaperon asleep. The most modest girl in America, the girl who blushes even at a man's allusion to his chilblains, once she gets her nose into a telephone mouth-piece, acquires a sudden and surprising self-assurance and aptitude at wheeze. Every time a young girl calls up a man for the first time, the devil instructs Tyson to lay aside for him, a year hence, a seat in the first row.

The Professional Diplomat.—International diplomacy very largely defeats itself—as witness the late whirligig in Paris—by reason of its excessive professional quality. One professional diplomat pitched against another arouses the latter's uneasiness and distrust quite as the latter, in turn, arouses the former's uneasiness and distrust. Like rival

guards or tackles on two football lines, each with suave grin sniffs the other, measures him, slants an eye to see that he isn't packing a slice of brick in his fist and, during the process, takes advantage of opportunity to make certain that the slice of brick in his own fist is carefully screened from his opponent. Each diplomat is trained to be suspicious, to slit the pupil, to smirk, and to oil the tongue. The hope for honest, above-board, constructive international give and take from men so coached is to hope for the downright impossible. What the hope of international peace calls for is not such professional diplomatic super-headwaiters, but simple, honest, unaffected men, of whom there are many in every nation. Had each nation sent to Paris an intelligent non-professional citizen with a cosmopolitan sense of sound ironic humour in place of the smooth, sour-faced professionals they did send, a clearer and better, a finer and more lasting understanding and agreement might have been born of their man-to-man meeting. Let, to the great conclave for world peace, Great Britain have sent a man like Bernard Shaw, France one like Anatole France, Germany a Ludwig Thoma and America a George Ade or an E. W. Howe, and, unless I am a bigger fool than my conscience sometimes assures me I am, we should have found ourselves all better off today. . . . And, what is more, tomorrow.

13

The American Credo, Continued—Additional leading doctrines and theories in the American credo:

That fish is a brain food.

That street-corner beggars have a great deal of money hidden away at home under the kitchen floor.

That it is advisable for a young woman who takes gas when having a tooth pulled to be accompanied by someone, by way of precaution against the dentist.

That all girls educated in convents turn out in later life to be hell-raisers.

That a young girl may always safely be trusted with the kind of man who speaks to her of his mother.

That a six-year-old boy who likes to play with toy steam engines is probably a born mechanical genius and should be educated to be an engineer.

That all celebrated professional humorists are in private life heavy and witless fellows.

That when one stands close to the edge of a dizzy altitude, one is seized peculiarly with an impulse to jump off.

That if, encountering a savage beast in the jungle, one falls upon the ground, lies still and pretends that one is dead, the savage beast will promptly make off and not hurt one.

That if one sits in front of the Café de la Paix, in Paris, one will see everybody in the world that one knows.

That it is always twice as hard to get rid of a summer cold as to get rid of a winter cold.

That a soft speaking voice is the invariable mark of a well-bred man.

That the persons who most enthusiastically applaud the playing of "Dixie" in restaurants are all Northerners who have never been further South than Allentown, Pa.

That the larger the dog, the safer he is for children.

That Catholic priests never solicit money from their parishioners, but merely assess them so much a head, and make them pay up instantly.

That an Italian street laborer can do a hard day's work on one large plate of spaghetti a day.

That all negroes born south of the Potomac can play the banjo and and are excellent dancers.

That whenever a negro is educated he refuses to work and becomes a criminal.

That whenever an Italian begins to dress like an American and to drive a Dodge car, it is a sign that he has taken to black-handing or has acquired an interest in the white-slave trust.

That, in the days when there were breweries, the men who drove beer-wagons, drank 65 glasses of beer a head a day, and that it didn't hurt them because it came direct from the wood.

That, until the time of American intervention, the people of the Philippines were all cannibals, and displayed the heads of their fallen enemies on poles in front of their houses.

That the missionaries in China and Africa make fortunes robbing the natives they are sent out to convert.

That there is a revolution in Central America every morning before breakfast, and that the sole object of all the revolutionary chiefs is to seize the money in the public treasury and make off to Paris.

That whenever there is a funeral in an Irish family the mourners all get drunk and proceed to assault one another with clubs.

That all immigrants come to America in search of liberty, and that when they attempt to exercise it they should be immediately sent back.

That whenever a rich American girl marries a foreign nobleman, he at once gets hold of all her money, then beats her and then runs away with an actress.

That if one begins eating peanuts one cannot stop.

That a bachelor never has anyone to sew the buttons on his clothes

That whenever a dog wags his tail it is a sign that he is particularly happy.

That cinnamon drops are coloured red with a dyestuff manufactured out of the dried bodies of cochineal insects.

That if one breaks a mirror one will have bad luck for seven years.

That two men seldom agree that the same girl is good-looking.

That in the infinitesimal space of time between the springing of the trap-door and his dropping through it, a hanged man sees his entire life pass in panorama before him.

That when Washington crossed the Delaware, he stood up in the bow of the boat holding aloft a large American flag.

That, whereas a man always hopes his first child will be a boy, his wife always hopes that it will be a girl.

That the first time a boy smokes a cigar he always becomes deathly sick.

That a woman always makes a practice of being deliberately late in keeping an appointment with a man.

That when a man goes to a photographer's to have his picture taken, the knowledge that he is having his picture taken always makes him very self-conscious, thus causing him to assume an expression which results in the photograph being an inaccurate likeness.

That if the lower line on the palm of one's hand is a long one, it is a sign that one is going to live to a ripe old age.

That Italian counts always make their expenses when they come to America by acting as wine agents.

That a Russian peasant, in the days of the czar, drank two quarts of vodka a day.

That a German farmer can raise more produce on one acre of land than an American can raise on a hundred.

That a boil on the neck purifies the blood.

That whenever a Frenchman comes home unexpectedly, some friend of the family makes a quick sneak out of the back door.

That every negro servant girl spends at least half of her wages on preparations for taking the kink out of her hair.

That all Frenchwomen are very passionate and will sacrifice everything to love.

The coal miners get so dirty that they have to wash so often that they are the cleanest workingmen in the world.

That the average French housewife can make such a soup out of the contents of a garbage-can that the eater will think he is at the Ritz.

That such authors as Dr. Frank Crane and Herbert Kaufman do not really believe what they write, but print it simply for the money that is in it.

That the average newspaper cartoonist makes \$100,000 a year.

That newspaper reporters hear, every day, a great many thumping scandals that they fail to print, and that they refrain through considerations of honor.

That the young East Side fellow who plays violin solos at the moving-picture theatre around the corner is so talented that, if he had the money to go to Europe to study, he would be a rival to Kreisler within three years.

That Paderewski, during the piano-playing days, wore a wig, and was actually as bald as a coot.

That lightning never strikes twice in the same place.

That when a doctor finds there is nothing the matter with a man who has come to consult him, he never frankly tells the man there's nothing wrong with him, but always gives him bread pills.

That on every trans-Atlantic steamer there are two smooth gamblers who, the moment the ship docks, sneak over the side with the large sum of money they have won from the passengers.

That if one gets out of bed on the left side in the morning, one has a mean disposition for the rest of the day.

That a woman who has led a loose life is so grateful for the respect shown her by the man who asks her to marry him that she makes the best kind of wife.

That if one eats an apple every night before retiring, one will never be ill.

That when a drunken man falls he never hurts himself.

That all Chinese laundrymen sprinkle their laundry by taking a mouthful of water and squirting it out at the wash in a fine spray; and

that, whatever the cost of living to a white man, the Chinese laundryman always lives on eight cents a day.

That if one fixes a savage beast with one's eye, the beast will remain rooted to the spot and presently slink away.

That if one eats cucumbers and then goes in swimming, one will be seized with a cramp.

That hiccoughs may be stopped by counting slowly up to one hundred.

That nine times in ten when one is in pain and a doctor assures one that he is squirting morphine into one's arm, what he is really squirting in is only warm water.

That a German civilian, before the war, had to get off the sidewalk whenever an army lieutenant approached him on the street, and that, if he failed to do so instantly, the lieutenant was free to run him through with his sword.

That while it may be possible, in every individual case of spiritualist communication with the dead, to prove fraud by the medium, the accumulated effect of such communications is to demonstrate the immortality of the soul.

That an Italian who earns and saves \$1,000 in America can take the money home, invest it in an estate, and live like a rich man thereafter.

That all Mormons, despite the laws against it, still practise polygamy, and that they have agents all over the world recruiting cuties for their harems.

That, in a family crisis, the son always takes the mother's part and the daughter the father's.

That whenever a crowd of boys go camping in summer two or three of them are drowned and the rest come home suffering from poison ivy.

That whenever a will case gets into the courts, the lawyers gobble all the money, and the heirs come out penniless.

That every female moving-picture star carries on an intrigue with her leading man, and will marry him as soon as he can get rid of his poor first wife, who took in washing in order to pay for his education in the art of acting.

That all theatrical managers are Jews, and that most of them can scarcely speak English.

That a great many of women's serious diseases are due to high French heels.

That if one does not scratch a mosquito bite, it will stop itching.

That when a girl gives a man a pen-knife for a present, their friendship will come to an unhappy end unless he exercises the precaution to ward off the bad luck by giving her a penny.

That whenever one takes an umbrella with one, it doesn't rain.

That the cloth used in suits made in England is so good that it never wears out.

That it would cost a great violinist \$100,000 a year to cut his hair.

That John D. Rockefeller would give his whole fortune for a digestion good enough to digest a cruller.

That a clergyman leads an easy and lazy life, and spends most of his time visiting women parishioners while their husbands are at work.

That it is almost sure death to eat cucumbers and drink milk at the same meal.

That all bank cashiers, soon or late, tap the till.

That the members of fashionable church choirs, during the sermon, engage in kissing and hugging behind the pipe-organ.

That women who are in society never pay any attention to their children, and wish that they would die.

That if one gets one's feet wet, one is sure to catch cold.

That if one holds a buttercup under a person's chin and a yellow light is reflected upon that person's chin, it is a sign that he likes butter.

That all penny-in-the-slot weighing machines make a fat woman light and a thin man heavier.

That, in the period just before a woman's baby is born, the woman's face takes on a peculiar spiritual and holy look.

That when a Chinese laundryman hands one a slip for one's laundry, the Chinese letters which he writes on the slip have nothing to do with the laundry, but are in reality a derogatory description of the owner.

That an old woman with rheumatism in her leg can infallibly predict when it is going to rain.

That celery is good for the nerves.

That when a play is given in an insane asylum the inmates always laugh at the tragic moments and cry at the humorous moments.

That if a girl takes the last cake off a plate she will die an old maid.

That men high in public affairs always read detective stories for diversion.

That the wireless news bulletins posted daily on ocean liners are made up on board.

That the Swiss, when they sing, always yodle.

That all German housewives are very frugal.

That the Thursday matinées given by Chauncey Olcott are attended only by Irish servant girls.

That the reason the British authorities didn't lock up Bernard Shaw during the war was because they were afraid of his mind.

That Professor Garner is able to carry on long and intimate conversations with monkeys in their own language.

That oysters are a great aphrodisiac.

That if one sleeps with one's head on a high pillow one will be round-shouldered.

That when one asks a girl to go canoeing she always brings along a bright red or yellow sofa cushion.

That when a woman buys cigars for a man she always judges the quality of the cigars by the magnificence of the cigar-bands.

That candle light makes a woman forty-five years old look fifteen years younger.

That, owing to the change in the course of the Gulf Stream, the Atlantic seaboard will soon have hot winters and cold summers.

That the licorice candy sold in cheap candy stores is made out of old rubber boots.

That if a boy is given all he wants to drink at home he will not drink when he is away from home.

That the second-class passengers on a trans-Atlantic steamship always have more fun than the first-class passengers.

That when a drunken man tries to speak, he always pronounces every "s" as "sh."

That champagne will prevent seasickness.

That thin wrists and slender ankles are unmistakable signs of aristocratic breeding.

14

On the Naming of Yachts.—Why the lack of originality in the christening of yachts? The yacht that is not named after a tribe of Indians is four times in five named after the owner's old girl. Why not a bit of invention now and then; or, if not invention, a touch of novelty? Why not, for example, the yacht *Hofbräu*? Or the yacht *Pyorrhea*? Or the yacht *Union Hill, New Jersey*? Or the good yacht *D'Annunzio*? I am getting tired of the *Oneidas*, the *Iroquois*, the *Maybells* and the *Louellas*.

15

On Critics.—Of critics, the one I can least stomach is the thunder-stealer who slyly and regularly goes in for the "As someone has aptly remarked" and the "As someone has cleverly observed" stuff. He is the kleptomaniac of criticism, the shoplifter in the literary jewelry store, the left-handed glory grabber. He is a critic in the sense that a phonograph is an opera singer. He is the oyster in the pearl. He borrows the cigar, borrows the tip-clipper, borrows the holder, borrows the match—and then congratulates himself warmly on achieving by himself the climacteric grand spit.

16

Great Moments from Rotten Plays.—The Great Moment from "Lady Audley's Secret," by C. H. Hazlewood, author of "The Marble Bride," "Lost Evidence," etc., etc.

II

ROBERT (*to* LADY AUDLEY). Now, madam, we will come to a reckoning.

LADY A. (*recoils from him*) You! Alive!

ROBERT. Aye, to punish and expose you. You thought to trap me, to silence me, by dooming me to a dreadful death. But Heaven be praised I was not sleeping when your wicked hands set fire to the house. No, I live to be your fate, and the avenger of my friend.

LADY A. What will you do?—proceed without evidence? And who are *you* that dare accuse me? Who are you that oppose yourself to me so constantly. I have wealth, boundless wealth, and I will use it to crush you—to crush you, Robert Audley!

ROBERT. How?

LADY A. *Thus!* (*rushes toward him with dagger; he wrenches it from her hand*)

ROBERT. And thus I rob the serpent of its sting!

LADY A. Let me pass.

ROBERT. Never! the law shall have its own!

LADY A. And *who* is to be my accuser?

Enter LUKE

LUKE. I, thank Heaven! I am spared to do an act of justice before I end my guilty life. I accuse that woman of—

ROBERT. No! hold, hold! It will be better not to cast a stain upon my uncle's name. Say nothing, I beg, I entreat of you.

LUKE. Then I will be silent, silent for ever—ever—ever. (*falls back in the arms of the PEASANTS*).

LADY A. (*aside*) He is dead, and I shall triumph over them all! (*the great bell of the Castle is now heard tolling*)

Enter ALICIA

ALICIA. Robert! Robert! my father is dead. Oh, pity me! pity and protect me! (*goes to ROBERT*).

ROBERT. Sir Michael dead! Now vengeance take thy own! Friends, hear me: I accuse that woman of the murder of my friend, George Talboys.

LADY A. How and where?

LUKE (*revives*) I—I will tell that. She pushed him down that well (*points to well. All start*), but it will be useless to search there now, for George Talboys is—

Enter George Talboys

GEORGE. Here! (*LUKE falls back dead*)

17

Sic Semper Mysticus.—The latest "mystic" to blow up and bust is the Rev. Dr. Maurice Maeterlinck. For twenty years, by the crafty hocus-pocus of living in a remote ruined castle, consorting with the birds, the bees and the butterflies, sending out photographs of a sad-eyed, ascetic and beatified patriarch, and writing pieces about the After Life and the Stars upon birch bark, the Rev. Dr. contrived to have himself viewed by the thitherward yokelry as a saintish and eerie creature. For twenty years. But mysticism is a hard job, and it grows tiresome. So one day the Rev. Dr. decided to take a little time off among the mortals.

Heathen America would be the scene of his visitation. Presently he came, in the wake of a great white dazzling celestial light, and the lowly peoples bethought them that it was but meet they bend the knee in awe, in veneration and in self-abasement. But before bending the knee for good, the lowly jakes thought that for once they'd take a look at one of their beloved mystics. They took it. And what they beheld was a vain old gent in a red tie and pearl-gray spats with a French cutie

on his arm. And then they took another look. And what they beheld further was the old gent one night clapping his hands for Ethel Barrymore in the Empire Theater and the next keeping time with his foot to the tunes of a musical comedy at the New Amsterdam. And they took then still other looks. And now they beheld the old gent passing the sassafras with Mary Garden in the green-room of the Lexington Avenue Opera House, and fighting with the manager of a lecture bureau for a bigger percentage of his box-office haul, and stealing a look at the comely chickens on Fifth Avenue, and signing a contract with Sam Goldfish to write scenarios out in Los Angeles for the movies, and gazing up in rapt wonder at the Singer Building, and sticking three slabs of butter into the gizzard of a single baked potato. And, behold-ing, the jakes said "Oh Hell, Ambrose" . . . and turned their devo-tions to Sir Oliver Lodge.

18

On an Actress' Charm.—An actress is charming on the stage in the degree that her audience imagines she is charming off the stage.

19

On Illusions.—The notion that as man grows older his illusions leave him is not quite true. What is true is that his early illusions are sup-planted by new and, to him, equally convincing illusions. The man of forty-five has just as many illusions as the boy of eighteen, but they are different illusions. The man of ninety, dying, carries with him to the grave, if not the boyhood illusion of one woman's love, the senescent illusion of all women's faithlessness, and if not the boyhood illusion of the goodness of Santa Claus, the senescent illusion of the goodness of God.

20

The Critical Root.—At the root of all criticism, there is always dis-coverable either envy or disgust. From the hands into which envy falls, there emanate the transparent and betraying "But in fairness to's," "In justice it should be admitted's," "However's," "But it would be hardly fair to's" and "But then's." From the hands into which dis-gust falls, there blooms the authentic critical flower. The worst of criticism is the bloom of envy; the best is the bloom of an irrepressible disgust.

21

Da Capo.—The great masses of the plain people, it would appear, never get enough. Let one mountebank fool them beyond bearing, and straightway they give their trade to another. Often, indeed, they go back to the very same booth. Do you remember all the highfalutin gabble, a year or so ago, about the benign hocus-pocuses of the Y. M. C. A.?—and how the soldiers, when they got back, were going to expose its deviltries without mercy, and warn the rest of the populace against it, and maybe ride some of its pussyfooted secretaries on poles? Well, the Y. M. C. A. is still in business at the old stand. Its secretaries still lecture on their great deeds in the war. Its lamasaries are still packed with Jews studying double-entry bookkeeping, electrical engineering, batik work and honest advertising, and with Christians shooting pool. It is still racking the yokelry with colossal "drives"—and getting the money.

22

American Credo, Continued.

That when peroxide of hydrogen is applied to an open wound, the ensuing bubbling shows that the wound is being efficaciously disinfected.

That the invariable dessert in a third-rate boarding house is stewed prunes.

That the late J. Pierpont Morgan was the easiest mark the fake antique dealers of Europe had discovered in 250 years, and that a syndicate of Italians actually built five factories in Italy for the sole purpose of manufacturing fake Rembrandts to sell to him.

That the monocle worn by an Englishman is made of cheap window glass, and that whenever he wants to see anything he has to drop it out of his eye.

That no circus ever lives up to its posters.

That the life of a young man who marries an old woman for her money is always a very miserable and unhappy one.

That Southerners are chivalrous.

That all college girls wear glasses and are very ugly.

That all men who want to work very little and get a lot of money for it are Bolsheviki.

That men who are good to animals are often wife-beaters.

That all criminals get caught sooner or later.

That water drunk from the washstand faucet is not as pure as water drunk from the kitchen faucet.

That if a child eats snow he will get diphtheria.

That all professional strong men are muscle-bound.

That prize-fighters are very good to their mothers, and that they are drunk all the time they are not training for a match.

That a baby knows instinctively whether a man is good or bad.

That all Harvard men are rather effeminate and affect a decided English accent.

That although 200 per cent of Washington's army deserted at one time or another, the patriotism and valour of the Continentals should set us a great example.

That there are a lot of things which are very good in theory but won't work in practice.

That if all the money in the world were to be divided, within a year the same men would have it again.

That the late Theodore Roosevelt got a dollar a word for all his magazine writings.

That the French make great soldiers; that the English Tommy is a great soldier; that the Canadians make great soldiers; that the Australians, Germans, Belgians and Americans make great soldiers; that the Cossacks are great soldiers; that the Japs make great little soldiers, etc., etc.

That the French, Dutch, Belgians, Jews, Scotch and Germans are very thrifty peoples; that the Italians save every cent they make; that the New England Yankee is very economical; that the Chinese and Japanese live on rice and are extraordinarily thrifty; that, in fact, no one is improvident and extravagant except Americans in New York and Paris, and all Irishmen.

That if all the coal in the world should suddenly give out, science would quickly devise something in its stead.

That it always takes a woman at least an hour and a half to dress, whereas a man finishes the job in three minutes.

On Happiness.—The greatest happiness is that of imminent, but not yet quite realized, achievement. To be about to succeed—that is true happiness. To have succeeded—that is to be in the Pschorr brewery, with diabetes.

24

Blonde Versus Brunette.—The blonde, on the average, appeals to the American male more often than her dusky sister for the same reason that the American male is more often beguiled by light beers than by dark, by tan shoes than by black, by brilliant restaurants than by dimly lighted ones, by colorado claros than by colorado maduras, by yellow raincoats than by black, and by highly burnished gold jewelry than by gold jewelry with a dark Roman finish. What this reason is, *mon cher Armand, je ne sais pas.*

25

Dazzling the Public.—The tendency of all men to magnify their trades by *escamoterie* is beautifully displayed in the case of the railway conductors. The work that a passenger conductor does is so simple and so trivial that any average eighteen-year-old boy could learn it in a week. Moreover, the notion that he carries an enormous responsibility, that the lives of his passengers depend upon his skill and diligence, is fully 99 per cent buncombe: all of the actual responsibility is upon the locomotive engineer. Nevertheless, the passenger conductors of the land, by parading before the public in florid uniforms and with heavy frowns upon their faces and by treating it in general as a German field-marshal might be expected to treat a mob of Socialist barbers, have so far convinced it of their importance that it consents readily to outrageous railway fares in order that they may be paid preposterous salaries, out of all reasonable proportion to their services. Of late the thing has gone even further. On many of the larger railways the conductor no longer deigns to collect tickets in person. Instead he stalks through the train with a so-called auditor, or adjutant, attending him, and this adjutant does all the actual work. And for this pompous parade the conductor is paid as much as a captain in the army!

In Europe the train conductor is paid probably one-fourth as much, and does ten times the work. He takes tips, but he earns them. A passenger who fees him may expect to get some service from him. He looks after windows, hears complaints politely, and even helps with the baggage. An American conductor would be staggered by any suggestion that he do such things. His sole duty is to enforce the notion of his stupendous dignity, to cow the boobery with his august and judicial mien, to keep up the grotesque farce that has made him what he is.

26

The Technique of Mystery.—Where in the so-called mystery or detective novel the exact opposite is more often true, the interest in the so-called mystery or detective play lies not in the manner of the author's detection of the guilty person, but in the manner of the author's concealment of him.

27

On Drama and the Acting of Drama.—Drama is the art of expressing human emotion in terms of eloquence. Acting is the art of expressing eloquence in terms of human emotion.

28

Woman's Intuition.—What passes for woman's intuition is more often intrinsically nothing more than man's transparency. To argue that there is something almost occult in a woman's instinctive divination of the fact that a man likes her is to argue that there is something almost occult in a rat's instinctive divination of the fact that, close at hand, there is a piece of cheese.

RÉVEIL

by Donn Byrne

Behold! This world I made with many an elf;
With gnomes and little people of the hills;
With shadow kings and dukes and margravines;
With men-at-arms; with knights in panoply,
And all within my little empery—
My courtly tournaments; my gallant scenes;
My hills of yellow furze; my little rills
That tinkled like a mass-bell; and my hives
Of honey bees; my owls that hoot o'night;
My cardinals, my bishops, and my priests,
My bannerets, my bugles, and my drums,
All of these fade, and mark you I myself
Am fading, like the moon when morning comes.

THE SECRET OF SUCCESS

by Donald Ogden Stewart

THE young man in search of employment came at last to the inner shrine in that temple of Modern Business known as the Ellsworth Products Co. As he stood hesitating at the portals, one of the high priests advanced to meet him, chanting the greeting of his order.

"Mr. Ellsworth is a very busy man. A *very* busy man," he droned, and at each pronouncement of the name "Ellsworth" the heads of the seven stenographic vestals in the office were reverently bowed.

Five times that morning in five outer offices had the young man been told that Mr. Ellsworth was a very busy man; five times had his letter of introduction carried him through the efficient obstacles which guard the inner temple from the eyes of infidel unbelievers. And now, his pilgrimage ended, for the sixth and last time he gave his name—Richard Kennedy, his business—an interview with the president regarding employment, his credentials—a letter of introduction from one of Mr. Ellsworth's friends.

While this letter was being examined, young Kennedy reverently surveyed the temple.

At one end was a huge mahogany door—the entrance to the throne room. His gaze fell next upon the seven virgins, busy at their consecrated stenographic tasks. One glance at these maidens told him that he was indeed on holy ground, for they were of such loveliness as belongs only in the offices of high executives. Kennedy had already, in the course of his pilgrimage, noted the significant business fact that standards of office furnishings and stenographic beauty increase progressively as one ascends in the scale of executive rank—exemplified in the present instance by the impressive early Georgian hangings and late Ziegfeldian typists of this office as contrasted with the plain chaste furniture and plainer, chaster stenographers of the lower departments.

"Sit down, Mr. Kennedy," said the president's private secretary, "Mr. Ellsworth is a very busy man."

Young Kennedy obediently took the designated chair outside the throne room door, from behind which he could hear at intervals a faint swishing noise. He idly wondered as to its cause, and one heretical

thought which occurred to him before he could check himself was that it sounded somewhat like the noise made by the swinging of a golf club.

His eye fell upon a magazine lying on a nearby desk. *Efficiency* it was called, *Efficiency—The Journal of Success*. He picked it up and was soon deeply engrossed in a fascinating article concerning a business man of Tacoma, Wash., who had actually eliminated twelve minutes wasted time per clerk per day by the masterful ingenuity of having the fountain pens of his employees filled each evening by the night watchman.

The next article, entitled "How I Make Men Like Me," was by Abraham Nussbaum, sales manager for the Sutco Tire Co., illustrated with graphic and convincing photographs of Mr. Nussbaum caught in the very act of making men like him. "The secret of my success," confessed Mr. Nussbaum, "is personality. Personality and pep—that's the stuff, boys!" And farther on in the article he gave this advice: "Radiate magnetism! Envelop your customer with your personality. Practice at home before a mirror until you are sure that everything about you radiates personal magnetism."

Young Kennedy looked around for a mirror, but before he had time for any practice in the radiation of personal magnetism, the private secretary announced that Mr. Ellsworth was ready to see him.

The swishing noise had ceased, all was silent behind the mahogany door. The high priest took the young man by the arm. A bell was struck, the seven vestals bowed their heads, the door swung open, and the worshipper beheld the Great Man seated on his throne. He stepped forward, trembling; the door closed behind him.

Richard Kennedy stood alone before the president of the Ellsworth Products Co.

"Well, young man!" and President Ellsworth directed at Kennedy those keen eyes which, as described in the April number of *Efficiency*, seem to "look right through you."

"Yes, sir," said young Kennedy. And then he added, by way of explanation, "Yes, sir."

"Well, young man—what do you want?"

The idea of wanting anything suddenly seemed so incredibly blasphemous to the young man that for a moment he was silent. Then he ventured to give his name, his request for employment and his letter of introduction.

Mr. Ellsworth adjusted an impressive pair of gold-rimmed eyeglasses

to his nose and gravely examined the letter with that shrewd, keen glance which had so impressed the interviewer for *Efficiency*. His shrewd, keen comment, "You want a job, young man?" after he had finished the letter asking that young Kennedy be given a chance, showed that he had instantly grasped the fundamentals of the situation.

"Yes, sir," replied Kennedy, adding, apologetically, "I'm just out of college." President Ellsworth took off his eyeglasses. There was an impressive silence. Finally the Great Man gravely clipped the end off a cigar, lighted it slowly, and spoke:

"Young man, when I first came to this city, I didn't have a cent. Not a penny."

He paused and closed his eyes to let the full significance of this fact sink in upon young Kennedy.

"Young man, listen to me."

The room was hushed. The smoke from President Ellsworth's cigar gradually settled around his head, covering him as with a cloud. Outside the building all noise of traffic had ceased. The sky was darkened. Suddenly there came a terrific clap of thunder, and from the cloud surrounding President Ellsworth was heard a voice saying:

"Young man, there are three rules for business success. The first of these is 'Don't watch the clock;' the second, 'Don't be afraid of getting your hands dirty;' and the third, 'Work just a little harder than the other man.'"

As he finished, the cloud ascended and President Ellsworth sank back exhausted.

The young man, overcome with emotion, could not speak. It was one of those rare moments in which words are superfluous; his heart overflowed with joy that he, of all people, had been chosen to be the recipient of the Great Man's secret of success.

It was Mr. Ellsworth who finally broke the silence.

"You will report to Mr. Augustus in Department 12 on Monday morning."

The young man's eyes shone with gratitude as he thanked his patron. A bell rang, the door opened, and with bowed head he backed out of the presence of the Great Man.

II

The following Monday he who had miraculously received the three commandments descended from Mount Sinai and went to work as

clerk No. 4 in Section No. 8 of Department No. 12 of the Ellsworth Products Co. at a salary of \$15 per week. Inasmuch as Richard had never been good at penmanship or long division, this was probably considerably more than he at first merited.

At the commencement of his business career in fact, on the very first morning, the young man came perilously near damnation; forgetting, in a moment of weakness, the first commandment, Richard was just on the point of *looking at the clock* when he remembered. It was indeed a narrow escape, and he shuddered for weeks afterward every time he thought of it.

The second commandment also caused him a great deal of real worry at first for, in spite of all his efforts, his hands were often quite clean.

The observance of the third and last commandment. "Work harder than the other man," didn't seem quite so difficult; in fact, in Richard's department, it was almost suspiciously easy.

After a few weeks Richard's hard work combined with his college education began to have its effect on his superiors, and sometimes he was entrusted with the addition of three and four columns of figures—a responsibility which the young man assumed with a modesty and capability which greatly pleased the older heads.

Richard did not spend his evenings in idle pleasure, either, as did the young men who had not been so fortunate as to have been entrusted with the three secrets of success. He subscribed for the Benjamin Franklin course in business administration, and after reading fourteen books he was quite ready to take an executive position in any business. He knew what caused panics and just how to prevent them; he learned that the cost of labor and materials was apt to increase periodically provided that some other factors did not cause a decrease.

So they made him a clerk in the filing department and he was entrusted with the stamping of the word "Filed," with the date, on every letter.

This promotion did not, however, make Richard conceited, and his innate modesty won him many friends among the other employees with whom he was quite popular as soon as it became known that he was a friend of Mr. Ellsworth.

One day, after Richard had been working for six months as filing clerk, he conceived an efficient idea for saving time. This was no less revolutionary a scheme than to cease stamping both the word "Filed" and the date, and simply imprint the latter in a certain definite place

which would, of course, signify that the correspondence had been filed on that date. Richard worked hard in perfecting this idea; he figured out that it would eliminate 302 movements of the clerk's arm in a day, which, allowing for Sundays, holidays and half days on Saturdays, would mean the saving of 87,580 movements per arm per clerk per annum.

When his idea was finally ready he took it to his immediate superior, Mr. Wilkes.

"That's all right," said Mr. Wilkes, for he believed in encouraging young men, up to a certain extent, "but the Routine Book says that the correspondence must be distinctly stamped 'Filed.' "

"But—" began Richard, and at that the patient Mr. Wilkes took down the Routine Book and pointed to the exact page, section and paragraph which supported his contention. This closed the argument.

Or rather, it would have closed the argument had Richard been a less ambitious young man.

But the more he thought about his idea the more efficient it seemed; he discovered also that in his previous figuring he had not allowed for the fact that the clerks worked overtime and all day Saturday during the winter months, which made his net total of saved-clerk-arm-movements per person per annum 92,365 instead of 87,580.

Fortified thus with an additional argument, this young Luther bravely contemplated nailing his thesis to the door of no less a person than president Ellsworth himself, but in several attempts he got no nearer that sacred portal than the office of the second assistant general manager, who coldly imparted to him the not entirely unknown fact that Mr. Ellsworth was a very busy man.

Then in his hour of despair Richard remembered Abraham Nussbaum—the sales-manager who had so successfully radiated personal magnetism in the pages of the *Efficiency* magazine. Three hours a night for the next five nights young Kennedy spent in front of a tall mirror, with a copy of Nussbaum's article on "How I Make Men Like Me" spread out before him; on the morning of the sixth day he was ready to try his skill. Behold—a magnetic smile at breakfast and the waitress forgot to charge him for heavy cream on his corn flakes; another smile, through the window of the café, and a street sweeper outside ran in and embraced him. This last was rather embarrassing, and Richard deliberately shut off as much of the magnetism as possible until he could reach the office. But he was so charged with personality that four news-

boys, two beggars, a plumber and a traffic policeman followed him to the door of his office, overpoweringly attracted to this magnetic young man.

In the office his progress to the throne of president Ellsworth was triumphal; managers, secretaries, stenographers—all instantly liked him and made way before his "Nussbaum" smile. But as he stood alone before the president all of young Kennedy's magnetism was promptly short circuited by the Great Man's patriarchal impressiveness.

"Well, young man," said Mr. Ellsworth, fumbling among the papers on his desk.

"Yes, sir," said he, "I am Richard Kennedy, sir. I have a plan which I have worked out for eliminating a great deal of unnecessary work in the clerical department, sir. It will save 92,365 movements of a clerk's arm in one year—and in ten years—"

During this speech the president had continued the search among his papers.

Suddenly he fixed his shrewd, keen gaze on young Kennedy and said "Humm."

Then, before Richard could reply to this, the Great Man pressed a button and a stenographer appeared.

"Miss Meyers," said the president, "did you see a little leather notebook of mine?"

There was a minute's silence. Richard trembled as he thought of the portentous possibilities of those notes—undoubtedly his complete record with the Ellsworth Products Co.

The fatal little book was found and handed to Mr. Ellsworth. Young Kennedy, in dumb suspense, watched the features of the Great Man for any sign of hope. At last the president shook his head sadly and muttered, "I ought to have had an 84 easily. Six strokes on number twelve—a par 3 hole—six—"

He looked up and saw young Kennedy. The shrewd, keen look returned instantly to his impressive features which, in the previous moment of forgetfulness, had carelessly become quite human.

"Well, young man?" he said.

"Why, sir," replied Kennedy in stubborn desperation, "I want to tell you about my plan for saving waste time in the clerical department."

President Ellsworth took off his gold-rimmed eyeglasses and listened thoughtfully as Kennedy unfolded his scheme.

When the young man had finished he sat lost in deep thought for some time, before he gave his answer.

"Young man," he said at last, "when I first came to this city I didn't have a cent. Not a penny."

He paused and closed his eyes to let the full significance of this fact sink in upon Kennedy before he resumed.

"Young man, there are three rules for business success. The first of these is 'Don't watch the clock;' the second, 'Don't be afraid of getting your hands dirty;' and the third, 'Work just a little harder than the other man.' "

The Great Man paused—then added:

"I hope that answers your question, young man."

"Yes, sir," said Kennedy gratefully as he bowed out of the room. "Thank you very much, sir."

III

Kennedy returned from his second pilgrimage to the Oracle greatly strengthened in his resolve to keep holy the three commandments on which hang all the laws of the profits. He realized more than ever before that it takes time and hard work to win true success. At the office he set to his task with added zeal; in the evenings he pored over his new correspondence course in Modern Business which guaranteed executive ability and a handsome set of nine books for \$65.

But after a few months more he began to grow restless. He felt that possibly he wasn't getting ahead as fast as he should; somehow there wasn't at all the old thrill in adding figures, initialing correspondence and in being efficient.

Furthermore, there had been a distressing visit to a Vocational Expert. While perusing his beloved *Efficiency* magazine one evening, his attention had been caught by a full page advertisement which demanded, in big type, "Young Man, Are You in the Right Job?" Under this was a photograph which Kennedy supposed at first to be a horrible example of a young man *not* in the right job; more careful study showed it to be Morris Stuttgart, A.B., Vocational Expert, who for \$25 would analyze your character and advise you at once as to your real life work.

So Kennedy called on Mr. Stuttgart and after sitting for half an hour in a strong light while the expert analyzed his character, he got a headache and the information that he had an unmistakable aptitude for a musical career. He thanked Mr. Stuttgart, paid his \$25, and lay awake

that night wondering why his parents had let him drop his piano lessons.

The next noon he sat at his desk, trying to concentrate on the chapter in his business course concerning "How to Write Effective Business Letters to Japan and China," when Mr. Fisher sat down beside him to pick his teeth. Mr. Fisher was a kindly chief clerk who sported three 18 karat molars and a 14 karat watch charm, the latter a present from his fellow clerks on the anniversary of his Twentieth Year with the Ellsworth Products Co.

"Well, Kennedy, what's new? Aren't married yet, are you?"

This was Mr. Fisher's daily question; Kennedy's daily answer was: "Well, not yet, Mr. Fisher. Can't get a girl to take me. How's Mrs. Fisher today?"

Kennedy had a sincere interest in the domestic welfare of his fellow employees, and never faltered in his daily enthusiasm over the latest photo of the wife and kiddies.

Mr. Fisher shook his head mournfully.

"She had a bad night again with her stomach."

Mrs. Fisher's stomach was a subject on which the whole office got minute daily reports. Then he added, "What are you reading?"

"Why, it's the Dearborn Business Course. Pretty good, but I guess you can't get much out of books. It's the hard, practical experience that counts, isn't it?"

Kennedy possessed the modest attitude of amused contempt toward mere book learning which college men diplomatically employ when speaking to those who are unfortunate enough to have Henry Ford's cultural background.

"Well, the Dearborn course is all right. Not as good perhaps as some others," replied Mr. Fisher, mentioning three or four names.

"What, you've taken all those correspondence courses, Mr. Fisher?" said the amazed young man.

Here was something wrong; surely Mr. Fisher couldn't have absorbed all that knowledge as to how to be an executive and still remain a chief clerk.

"Oh, sure, I've read them all," was the answer.

"Well, tell me, have most of the clerks here taken the course?" asked the young man.

"Sure," was the surprising answer. "Long ago."

"Well, then, how about Mr. Schmidt?" The mystified young man

mentioned the name of one of the highest officials; probably some handicap had kept the clerks from being executives; quite likely they had been "clock watchers" or even worse, afraid of getting their hands dirty.

"Oh, Mr. Schmidt?" said Mr. Fisher. "Well, that's different. You see, he married Mr. Ellsworth's oldest daughter. Certainly a dandy fellow, too—Mr. Schmidt. Calls me Ed—always joshing me about my kids." And Mr. Fisher chuckled reminiscently.

"Oh," said young Kennedy. "He married Mr. Ellsworth's daughter. I see. And how about Mr. Spencer, the vice-president?"

It was Mr. Spencer who had patted Richard several times approvingly on the back when he had found the young man studying during the noon hour.

"Spencer—say, there's a regular man," replied Mr. Fisher. "Nothing stuck-up about him. He asked Bertha and I to his wedding—married Kitty Ellsworth, you know—the old man's second daughter. My, it was some swell wedding, I'll tell the world."

"Yes," said the young man, "it must have been."

Then there came to him the vision of J. D. Ellsworth battling his sturdy way from poor boy to president.

"But," he said to Mr. Fisher, "but, how about Mr. Ellsworth? He came to this city without a cent, and by following three rules he won his way to the top. Told me so himself."

"Yes, sirree!" said Mr. Fisher. "That's just what he did. I can remember when he first came. I was his boss for a while. Used to say to him, 'John, do this now,' or 'John, hurry up.' There wasn't any 'Ellsworth Products Co.' then, it all belonged to old Walter Kinnard, and when he died it went to his daughter, Ethel. I guess you've met her—"

"Why, no—where?" said young Kennedy.

"She's Mrs. J. D. Ellsworth, the old man's wife, you know," was the answer.

The door of the office opened suddenly and young Kennedy looked up at the sound of a woman's laugh. A plain young girl swept by them and passed into the inner sanctum.

"Say, isn't she a beauty?" whispered Mr. Fisher with awe in his voice.

"Why, no—I wouldn't pick her out of a crowd." The young man listlessly surveyed the book on business efficiency.

"Don't you know who she is?" said Mr. Fisher.

"Why, some stenographer, I suppose," replied Kennedy.

"She's Ellsworth's youngest daughter, Grace," said Mr. Fisher in the same tone of voice with which he would have mentioned the deity or John D. Rockefeller.

"What? Ellsworth's got another daughter?" cried the young man, clutching Fisher's arm.

"Sure."

"Married?"

"No—just nineteen."

"Oh," said young Kennedy.

IV

So he married her.

V

Thirty-five years later a trembling young man stood in the impressive office of Richard Kennedy, President of the Kennedy (formerly the Ellsworth) Products Co.

"Yes, sir," he said eagerly to Mr. Kennedy. "I want to show you that a college man can start at the bottom and work up."

President Kennedy took off his gold-rimmed eyeglasses.

"Young man," he said, lighting a cigar, "when I first came to this city I didn't have a penny. Not a cent."

He paused and closed his eyes to let the full significance of this fact sink in upon the young man.

"But I made three rules which I always followed. They are the secret of success."

"Yes, sir," said the youth, eagerly.

"The first rule is, 'Don't watch the clock;' the second, 'Don't be afraid of getting your hands dirty;' and the third, 'Always work just a little harder than the other man.' "

THE RENUNCIATORY GESTURE

by Mabel McElliott

ALL her life she had practised it—the gesture.

It had begun, this "play acting," when she was very, very small indeed. She remembered darting guiltily away from the mirror in her mother's room at the sound of a warning footstep in the hall. Draped in a shawl, her mother's best hat sliding giddily down her shining, freckled little forehead, she had been practising it.

The Renunciatory Gesture.

That, at least, was what she had called it after she grew up.

Then she knew it was only fun to draw her turquoise ring grandly from her finger, strike a haughty attitude (observing herself meantime in the mirror) and say, to an imaginary suitor:

"This is the end . . ." or

"Take it, please, . . ." or

"Everything is over between us."

Small as she was, she had greedily sampled the books of romance which their limited library afforded; and this was one of the dramatic bits she had treasured for herself from the frayed pages of some old novel by the Duchess, perhaps; or Laura Jean Libby; or Rosa Nouchette Carey. She really could not say where she had read it first.

At fourteen she still played the game. Time did not seem to dull its charm. Then she had been violently and silently in love with the somber dark-haired boy down the street: the one who wore a tiny red cap when he played baseball, and whistled "Cheyenne, Cheyenne, Hop on My Pony" when he went to the store for his mother.

She used to sit happily in the dark, of nights, watching the light that streamed from the window of his house. And sometimes, when dreams palled, she would practise the gesture again. She would pretend she was twenty . . . and beautiful.

It was not easy to imagine, the beautiful part, but she managed it somehow. Yes, her freckles somehow miraculously effaced . . . her painfully straight hair a glory of tumbled curls . . . her eyes "strangely sweet and blue as corn-flower" (that was another book phrase) . . . she would charm the somber one.

She would be lovely in a frock of pale yellow, and come dancing down a dark old staircase into a room sweet with firelight and flowers.

He would be there, at the foot of the stairs. Awed by her beauty, he would gasp out broken phrases of adoration. Would press upon her a ring . . . "with a single glittering stone in it."

She would stand there, tense, for a moment. Would look at him with great, mysterious eyes.

Then she would put it back into his hand with a gesture of ineffable pity.

"Take it please," she would murmur, in tones of incredible sweetness.

"Is there someone else?" the boy would ask, with a note of bitterness in his voice.

She would nod her head slowly in assent. . . .

That was as far as she ever got with that particular day dream. When she had got to that point, she would begin all over again—pale yellow frock and all. But sometimes the frock would be mauve. Or pale blue. Or ladyslipper pink. She varied that part of it. And sometimes she would be carrying an armful of flowers, which she would drop in surprise, as she caught sight of him.

When she was sixteen, the dream changed. There was a violinist who led the orchestra in the stock company theater near her home. He had been there a long time before she noticed him. She had been absorbed in dreams. . . .

She had not actually observed him until one memorable afternoon when he had risen in his place in the pit to play a solo. It had been, she remembered, that poignantly sentimental, "Believe Me, If All Those Endearing Young Charms." (Because it was St. Patrick's Day, probably.)

At any rate, she had been bewitched by the dragging loveliness as the notes dripped from his violin. She had noticed, for the first time, that he was young and astonishingly good-looking; that he had fair hair and a cleft chin and keen blue eyes. That he looked more like a rising young business man than the leader of an unimportant orchestra in an unimportant outlying theater.

She had been in a highly impressionable state, helped along, probably, by the romantic tenor of the drama the company presented that day; and she had fallen for him with all her heart.

Yes, after that he had been, in her dreams, the Hero. The superman to whom she paid homage. Then she had begun again to practise the gesture upon *him*.

He would ask her to marry him. . . . In gentle, flowery, fervent language, he would attempt to press upon her the boon of his manly devotion.

She would sigh . . . turn her head delicately (like a lily on its stem) and accept. Later the Gesture would come into play . . . this after he had offended in some way—negligence—or lack of understanding—or something. . . .

Then she would put the ring back into his hand, gently . . . but finally—

Yes, all her life she had planned this, this *coup d'état*.

All her life she had been waiting, subconsciously, for this triumphant moment.

Now it was no good . . . no earthly use.

All her rehearsals had been in vain.

As she stood in the dreary, smoky dawn of an August morning, looking wearily down the dim cañon of the street, she realized that her chance had come, and that somehow she was being cheated of it.

Cheated in a fashion that was wickedly unfair.

She looked with distaste at her husband, sleeping heavily on the untidy davenport bed. At the ugly room. The old-fashioned grate was littered with cigarette ashes. The remnants of their midnight supper, over which they had drearily quarreled, stared at her from the dim table in the kitchenette, beyond.

Yes, she was being cheated of her Moment, even as she had been cheated of life and romance.

She was leaving him. Clearing out for good and all. This was the time to put to use, in a real drama, the gesture she had perfected through years of dreaming.

But she could not. Could not toss her head . . . turn it slowly on her slim throat . . . press into his limp palm the jewels he had given her.

The irony of it struck her as she paused before the streaked mirror to put a final pathetic touch to her cheap hat.

She could not give back her wedding ring.

He had pawned it the night before.

THE PERIPATETIC PRINCE

by John Reed

ON the barren Andean steppe, swept by the terrible winds that roar between worlds, a heroic granite statue of Peace—erected between revolutions—marks the meeting place of three republics: San Cristobal, Incana and Montemura. San Cristobal City lies a two-hour journey west, in a cleft of the mountains ten thousand feet above the sea; hanging to the steep banks of the Rio del Real, whose torrential thunder, as it plunges furiously down to the Pacific, makes a booming bass for the never-silent church bells of San Cristobal. Above it Santa Maria lifts its white, unscaled head into a sky always dazzling blue, shutting out the sun from the city in the afternoon. On the right bank of the stream is the Indian town; and on the left squats the thick-walled Spanish city, with its narrow, steep streets, its plaza, its cathedral and monastery and twenty-eight churches, much as Pizarro built and left it.

"*Blitzen!*" said the Prince Friedrich Wilhelm Heinrich of Hohenzollern-Stüchau as he alighted from the Trans-Andean Railroad's train of honor. "It is beautiful scenery, yes. But livelier cities have I seen. . . . It is a good place to die in." His tired, dissolute face wore an expression of extreme ennui.

"The air is good here," answered the Baron Marshal von Loewenbrun deferentially, but with a note of satisfaction in his voice. "Your Highness can perhaps rest. The doctor—"

"The Doctor!" sneered the Prince. "Didn't the idiot say that it would be dangerous for me to come to such a height? *Hein?* And am I not here in perfect health? *Gott*—the doctor had the impudence to tell me that drinking was bad for my heart! . . . That is why I left him there." He jerked his thumb over his shoulder toward the coast. The Herr Baron merely shrugged his shoulders and said nothing. And the next moment they were confronted by a group of bowing little brown men, gilded and be-uniformed: *el Presidente*, Ramon Gonzalez; the Admiral of his Navy—which consisted of one tugboat; the Secretary of his Treasury—which was empty; and the Minister of his Foreign Affairs—which were badly balled up. It was, as a matter of fact, largely on account of these foreign affairs that the President and his cabinet were so obsequious and eager. The interminable, elaborate formalities of Spanish courtesy came sonorously from them; the Presi-

dent bowed; the Prince bowed; a brass band in the plaza played simultaneously "Die Wacht am Rhein" and "Viva Libertad," the national anthem of San Cristobal; cannons were fired and people cheered; an address of welcome was offered. Meanwhile the sun went behind Santa Maria, and the subtle chill of great altitudes crept into the air.

Said the President: "I cannot half convey to His Highness the pleasure he has done me in deigning to honor my poor capital with a visit. And since he has come against the advice of his physician, I and my republic are exalted to be able to charge ourselves with his safety and well-being. . . ."

Prince Friedrich shivered and yawned. His manners were unconventional.

"Herr President," he replied, "your city is magnificent, and your welcome truly touches me. The friendship between two such great nations as the Republic of San Cristobal and the German Empire is a guarantee of the world's peace. Have you such a thing as a drink of Scotch whiskey?"

Locally, the principality of Hohenzollern-Stüchau is known as "the Emperor's hip pocket." During the youth of Prince Friedrich, life in his father's capital city of Neustadt, as well as in Munich, Dresden and Berlin, was considerably accelerated by that young man. In fact, I may state authoritatively that the Prince had succeeded in doing away with much of the deadly ceremonial of Neustadt court life. Finally, after a stroke of epilepsy and an escapade with La Torella of the Folies, there came an underground hint from the general direction of Berlin that His Highness would be the better for a change of air. And shortly afterward Prince Friedrich was attached to the diplomatic service and ordered on a friendly mission. The sagacious eye of His Imperial Majesty had long dwelt on South America; colonists and consuls reported great unclaimed areas of arable land, boundless rubber forests and deserts underlaid with nitrate. Besides this, a revolution involving the destruction of German property had once made San Cristobal liable for an indemnity—which had never been paid. A show of friendship—a ceremonial visit by a German princeling—well, there was value in a foothold even in San Cristobal. The three republics were intensely jealous of each other. In the shadow of the statue of Peace, they watched each other like cats. Whichever republic secured a visit from the Prince would gain vastly in prestige, if not materially.

Thus the wherefore of Prince Friedrich's presence in San Cristobal against his doctor's orders, and the warmth of his welcome there.

"These papers having been signed," said the Prince dully, "I propose that the evening be given over to mirth and revelry. *Gesundheit!*"

"*Salud!*" responded the President politely, at the same time shuddering as the unaccustomed whiskey seared his throat.

Herr Baron Loewenbrun looked anxious. "If Your Highness would listen to me—"

"You cannot, sir, take from me anything that I would more willingly part with," quoted Friedrich pointedly.

The Baron shrugged and rose. "Very well, Your Highness." He hesitated, cast a despairing glance at the whiskey bottle, at the feet of the Admiral appearing from under the edge of the table, and at the face of the President, seemed about to say something—and went out.

"A song! A song!" bellowed the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

"That old fool would put a damper on any party," said the Prince.

"Your Scotch, though not of the first water, so to speak, has sustaining qualities." He poured himself a four-finger tot. "The friendship of two such great nations—*Teufel!* Let us put by the formalities. You know and I know that if your little half-mark republic doesn't behave itself, the German Empire will send a torpedo boat down here and blow you off the map—"

"*Basta!* That is perfectly true," came the Admiral's voice from beneath the table.

"Señor! Your language is inexcusable!" Gonzalez had risen unsteadily to his feet.

"It is. It is," agreed the Prince affably. "Not more so, however, than your Scotch."

"*Carramba!*" cried the President. "Does Your Highness understand that you have insulted my glorious country?"

"It speaks!" The Prince made as if to examine a mechanical marvel. "*Blitzen!* The truth always insults someone. More Scotch!"

"Then, Señor," said Gonzalez, "you shall give me satisfaction in the *duello!*"

"No, no!" The Minister threw himself between. But too late.

President Gonzalez drew back and slapped the Prince smartly on the cheek with his open hand. Then an astonishing thing happened. His Royal Highness tried to rise, and sank back, staring-eyed. For a moment the red mark on his face stood sharply outlined. Then it faded suddenly, while a livid grayness spread over his countenance. The arms fell inertly by his side and swung there; and slowly, with con-

vulsive jerks, the whole body stiffened and became rigid. In the awful silence came the voice of the Admiral gently from beneath the table: "Oo, la-la-la . . ."

"*Madre de Dios!*" whispered Gonzalez. In one bound the Minister of Foreign Affairs had reached the Prince. He felt of the pulse, he put his ear to the heart, and raised a face as livid as Friedrich's.

"Dead!"

"A doctor! A doc—" But the Minister had clapped a hand over Gonzalez's mouth. "Fool! Cry out once more and we are lost!" he hissed. "We have charged ourselves with his safety. He is dead. Do you understand? The Prince of Hohenzollern-Stüchau is dead! If he dies in San Cristobal, that will mean the end of the republic!"

"*Basta!* But he is already—"

The Minister tiptoed to the door, which he carefully locked. For the moment he seemed possessed of demoniac energy. Both men were terribly sober. The sweat stood out on their foreheads. Beneath the table, the song of the Admiral was very faint. Gonzalez stirred him with his foot. "Sing!"

"Oo, la-la-la . . ."

"No man is dead until he is buried!" The words fairly seared.

The President threw out his arms miserably. "Ah, *zut!* I give myself up! My glorious country, for whose liberty so many patriots—"

The Minister gripped his arm until he almost cried out. "Drink! Drink. I tell you. We are weak—this will steady us. Now, let us consider. Prince Friedrich was left drinking with us in this room. It must not be believed that he died here. Think! For God's sake, think! San Cristobal was known to have a grievance against the Empire. The Prince is persuaded to visit this city. He dies here. Imagine what ugly rumors from Incana and Montemura will reach the ears of the Emperor!"

The President responded with a groan. He saw no light anywhere. "And when the Baron sees him—"

"The Baron will *not* see him!" hissed the other.

"You have a plan?" cried Gonzalez hoarsely.

"The Prince shall die in Incana!" The President looked at him as at one bereft of his wits.

"You are still intoxicated," he said severely.

"Can't you see?" exploded the Minister. "The Prince makes up his mind suddenly that he will travel to Incana. He is known to be ex-

tremely impulsive, and somewhat under the influence of liquor. We cannot be suspected. It is well known that we would do anything to persuade the Prince not to go to Incana—"

"Now?" queried the President in incredulous tones. "He shall travel now, at night?"

"Evidently if we wait for morning the Baron will travel also."

"*Caramba!* I believe it can be done!" Gonzalez got up from his seat and excitedly paced the room. "We will send a courier at once to Ventura, and the Prince shall start in one hour. . . . Ah, *amigo*, this is a great service that you have done the republic!" He threw his arms around the Minister and kissed him. "We shall confound our enemies of Incana, and save ourselves for the glory which destiny holds in store. Quick! We will dispatch a messenger to Ventura! In the meantime, no one must know that all is not well!"

The Minister of Foreign Affairs stirred the Admiral with his foot.

"Oo, la-la-la-la-la . . ."

Beyond San Cristobal the railroad does not go. Through that country of scorched and frozen desert, gigantic precipices and mountains that scrape the stars, a boulder-strewn trail too rough for vehicles follows the ancient Indian and llama track upward to the high plateau where looms the statue of Peace at the meeting place of the three republics. A few wandering Indians, driving their llamas down through the starlight on the last stage of their long journey to San Cristobal, stared amazedly at the cavalcade which wound past them: an escort—ten nondescript cavalrymen, cursing the officer who had driven them from their warm beds—followed by two figures on horseback.

"Are you comfortable, Your Highness? . . . Yes, indeed, you are right. It is indeed freezing at night in these altitudes." The Minister of Foreign Affairs shivered. "Really, are you sure you have no need of the extra *poncho*?" He removed it from the Prince's shoulders and placed it on his own. "Your Highness is most generous."

The Prince rode rather stiffly. His legs stuck out at each side, and his body did not give with the movements of his horse. In fact, a leather cinch thong knotted about each leg and the friendly arm of the Minister of Foreign Affairs were all that held him in the saddle.

"It is the German cavalry style of riding," said a trooper who had traveled.

Above them old Santa Maria glittered frostily on all its leagues

and leagues of ice. The great stars, that seemed to hang near in the cold sky, shed a radiance surpassing moonshine. Jinglyingly they wound upward, and the soldiers, looking back occasionally, noticed that the Minister was earnestly addressing the Prince, while the latter's gaze seemed intent upon the stars.

It must have been about two o'clock in the morning when the troop encountered the courier riding back. Almost simultaneously they came in sight of the statue of Peace and saw the escort of the Republic of Incana massed beneath it on the frontier. The Minister of Foreign Affairs opened his knife blade and cut the thongs about the Prince's knees.

He said: "What with the stiffness of the cold and Your Highness's natural rigidity, you will remain erect until the road slopes downhill. Then, I am afraid . . ."

The troopers of Incana were drawn up at attention to one side of the road. Those from San Cristobal stopped, according to etiquette, on their own side of the border, while the Minister rode forward with the Prince. *El Capitan* Miranda, being of rank too low to be introduced to His Highness, merely stood at rigid salute, while the two rode past.

"*Adios*, Your Highness!" said the Minister cheerfully at the same time bowing low over his saddle. "I shall execute all your commissions." He gave the Prince's horse a sly cut with his whip. The animal bounded forward. Trumpets brayed. The two escorts saluted, and the Incanians wheeled and set out at a spanking trot on the trail of their illustrious visitor.

Ventura was in an uproar. Upon the arrival of the courier from San Cristobal, the astounding news had been immediately telegraphed to the capital. The President of Incana at once ordered that a suitable escort meet the Prince and bring him to the Ventura Palace. He himself would arrive by fast coach. It had somewhat astonished that executive that the Prince should travel without warning at midnight from one republic to another; but he decided to condone the habits of European royalty, and be humbly thankful for this un hoped-for blessing. A prince at Ventura! The old Spanish families of that ancient and aristocratic city prepared to sit up all night, if necessary, to welcome His Highness.

"*Caramba!*" said Señor Don Rogero del Segovia, who owned vast silver mine concessions. "If the Republic of Incana can secure the support of Germany, *por Dios* we can assault San Cristobal and secure a port upon the sea!"

It must have been about four o'clock in the morning when the four-horse mountain coach of the President strained galloping up the last rocky ascent and lumbered into Ventura. A great throng of silent people clustered in the plaza gave a few weak cheers. Disaster was in the air.

"*Basta!*" exclaimed the President in some annoyance. "A revolution now would be in the worst possible taste." Hardly had the oak palace courtyard gates clanged shut, when a maniac in disheveled uniform tore at the coach door.

"*Señor Presidente! Señor Presidente!*" cried Captain Miranda hoarsely. "A terrible thing has happened! The Prince—fell from his horse—dead!"

Morning came tranquilly in San Cristobal, with a peaceful clangor of church bells. Herr Baron Marshal von Loewenbrun lay on his back in his front room of the Hotel de la Paz, while a slatternly servitor, with a brown cigarette drooping from his mouth, arranged his breakfast of chocolate and stale rolls on the table. Through the window the Baron could see the plaza thronged with people awaiting the Prince's rising: a host of peasants and shopkeepers, each with his mantilla'd womenfolk, and behind them a few hundred Indians, dark, immobile, wrapped in the inevitable llama skins.

"Has His Highness risen?" asked the Baron. The man stared coolly at him, shrugging his shoulders. "*No entiendo,*" he answered surlily.

There came a rap at the door. Two frowzy soldiers, with impossibly ancient carbines, entered and stood at each side presenting arms.

"Ah, Señor Baron, I trust you have had an excellent night!" said the President. His face was pale, but cordial.

"Herr President!" said the Baron, rising in his pajamas and clicking his bare heels together. "Excellent! Few beds that I have ever slept in have made such an impression on me. The Prince—His Highness still sleeps?"

"*Carramba!*" said Gonzalez with an expression of great surprise. "You do not know? His Highness left word that you were to be notified as soon as you awoke. He did not wish to disturb you."

"Notified of what?" in a voice tinged with uneasiness born of a lengthy experience.

"*Por Dios,* that he has gone to Ventura!"

"Gone? When? And where is Ventura?"

"Ventura is a city in Incana, about twenty miles from here over the mountains. It was High Highness's fancy at midnight to go at once. He was my guest. All that is mine is His Highness's. . . . High-spirited, you know. . . . Youth . . ." The President shrugged his shoulders and smiled deprecatingly, in a way which suggested the drinking bout of the night before. "Accordingly, I was obliged to yield to His Highness's demands. The Minister of Foreign Affairs accompanied him to the frontier and delivered His Highness over to the escort awaiting him."

"His Highness is a fool!" cried the Baron angrily, forgetting for the moment his tact. "The Emperor will be chagrined that I allowed him to do so without escorting!"

"Be not alarmed, Señor Baron," said the President with an effort. "The roads are safe. There is no danger. However, I may tell you that it grieved me greatly to see His Highness leave me. I used every means in my command to persuade His Highness—"

"Drunken young idiot!" muttered the Baron. Then aloud: "It is not that I fear for brigands, Your Excellency; it is that the Prince is subject to attacks of epilepsy—"

"Ah!" said the President blandly. "And what is that?"

"It is a dangerous illness," explained the Baron, knitting his brows in annoyance. "The body becomes rigid. The pulse almost stops beating. It is as if the invalid were dead. Since childhood!"

"Man—man!" gasped Gonzalez, gripping his arm. "What are you saying! The Prince—His Highness—is often so attacked?" Great beads of sweat stood out on his forehead. His eyes were like an insane man's.

"Gott! What is the matter, Your Excellency?"

"To horse! To horse! We must catch him!" Tearing himself away from the Baron's grip, Gonzalez plunged down the stairs. The two soldiers stumbled after, and the Baron, after a moment of stupefaction, hurried frantically into his clothes and did likewise. On the plaza a group of cavalry had hastily gathered, putting on coats, tightening cinches, obviously unprepared. The President, white as a sheet, leaned against the Minister of Foreign Affairs, who was in turn supported by the Admiral, still wobbly from the effects of the night before. Beyond them gathered a curious throng of spectators.

"For God's sake, Your Excellency!" said the Baron, who detested being hurried. "Has everybody gone crazy? Is anything the matter with His Highness? Did you not say there was no danger?"

Incapable of speech, Gonzalez waved weakly to the Baron's horse. It was, as usual, the Minister of Foreign Affairs who retained his presence of mind.

"His Highness looked rather—er—unwell," he stammered. "We are afraid. Not for anything would His Excellency have sickness overtake his guest!"

"But why—" insisted the Baron pettishly. Before the words were out of his mouth, the spurred horse of Gonzalez leaped savagely forward. With a shout, the troopers sprang to their saddles and followed in disorder. Someone lashed the Baron's mount.

"*El Principe!*" roared the people. "Where is *El principe?*"

"*Carramba!*" groaned the Minister. "If we don't bring him back we'll have another revolution on our hands." And the cavalcade turned a corner and swept furiously up the dry *arroyo* which was the international road.

Early in the afternoon an Indian llama train about three miles from Ventura was scattered and stampeded by a band of horsemen led by a lunatic cruelly roweling his exhausted mount. Fifteen minutes later the horse of President Gonzalez dropped dead in the plaza before the palace, and Gonzalez himself was beating with bruised fists on the *patio* gates. Then came five troopers, galloping in a bunch; followed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and a stout blond man who reeled in his saddle and said from time to time, "*Wasser! Wasser!*" Another detachment precipitated itself into the plaza, and from a distance rang numberless hoofs on the cobbled street.

"To arms! *Qui vive?* To arms! The enemy!" cried a sentry. A bugle shrilled, and out of the barracks poured the army of Incana.

"Treachery!" cried Captain Miranda to His Excellency the President. The latter mounted somewhat fearfully to the balcony of the palace. Still the horsemen of San Cristobal irrupted into the square; his own troops, in every stage of undress, loaded their rifles in great haste; beyond, Indians and townspeople, armed with axes or primitive rifles, flowed menacingly into the plaza from every side street. He discerned President Gonzalez beating at his gates, shouting "Open!"

"Señor Presidente," called the chief executive of Incana sternly, "what does this invasion mean? *Carramba!* In a time of peace!"

"Where is my Prince?" shouted Gonzalez, shaking his fist at the balcony. "What have you done with my Prince?"

The President turned to Captain Miranda and grew excessively pale.

"Withdraw your troops at once from this territory!" he cried, in trembling accents. "*Basta*, your Prince indeed! What manners are these, Señor Presidente of San Cristobal, that demand at the point of the bayonet a guest who enjoys the hospitality of the Republic of Incana?"

Gonzalez breathed a sigh of relief. "Ah, then His Highness is here—and safe? I have come to escort him to San Cristobal. His Highness is in good health?" anxiously.

The other considered for a moment. Then: "His Highness was taken seriously ill upon his arrival this morning." Gonzalez groaned. "*Himmel!*" cried the Baron. "But he quickly recovered," continued the President, "and, in spite of all my persuasions, insisted upon continuing his journey!"

"What!" yelled Gonzalez, leaping into the air.

"At eight o'clock this morning His Highness set out for Bolivar in the Republic of Montemura."

Gonzalez stood quite still, swallowing two or three times. He was incapable of speech. Suddenly he burst into action. The nearest horse happened to be that of an Incanian trooper. Before the latter realized what had occurred, the President had climbed up one side and tumbled him off in the dust. "To Bolivar! To Bolivar!" he cried. The dispossessed cavalryman threw up his carbine and fired wildly into the air.

"Horse thief!" cried Captain Miranda.

"*Carramba!* Our President is called horse thief!" A quick burst of firing astounded the Incanians.

"Fire! Kill the insolents!" ordered Miranda. A scattered volley spent itself harmlessly, but the great throng in the plaza set up a cheer and pressed toward their hereditary enemies.

President Gonzalez turned in his saddle with a countenance mottled with rage.

"Scoundrel!" he cried to the President of Incana. "I will deal with you later! I will return with a German army and exterminate these vermin!" Hoofs drummed thunderingly, and they were gone.

Before dawn the President of Incana and Captain Miranda had descended the stairs of the palace, carrying between them the stiff and unresponsive person of Prince Friedrich Wilhelm Heinrich von Hohenzollern-Stüchau. They proceeded stealthily, but there was no need of caution. Everyone was asleep, even the two sentries. The coach that had brought the President still remained in the courtyard; and into this, with infinite difficulty, His Highness was forced. The blinds were then

drawn. At sunrise a courier departed at high speed for Bolivar, and before the crowd had begun to gather in the plaza, the escorted coach rumbled out of Ventura. Between Incana and Montemura the road is practicable for wheeled vehicles. At the statue of Peace, Captain Miranda delivered over his charge to the waiting cavalry of Montemura.

"His Highness sleeps," he said. "You will not disturb him."

Five miles beyond the statue the road into Montemura cuts into the side of a hill of loose stones, which continually slip down in small landslides, making the highway a source of danger to travelers and expense to the nation. About half-way around this hill, a trooper suddenly heard a low rumble. "Look out!" he screamed. The lead horse of the coach sank back on his haunches; the driver strained at the lines, shouting. But too late. Slowly at first, but with increasing speed, the off wheels slid. The coach careened, toppled, and amid a yell of horror, crashed ponderously into the ravine.

"The Prince! The Prince! Where is His Highness?" demanded President Gonzalez, as he pulled his foaming steed to a halt ten miles farther on, in the dark of the evening. The troopers of Montemura were drawn up defensively across the road to face this horde of strange horsemen, pouring up from the south.

"What prince?" asked their captain elaborately.

"What prince! Idiot, were you not escorting Prince Friedrich to Bolivar? He is not here—"

"Ah, yes! The Prince, to be sure! He has decided to continue his journey to San Cristobal—"

"Liar!" Gonzalez raised his whip and cut the other across the cheek.

"*Carramba!* It is a deadly insult! And who are you, dog of a foreigner?"

"*Basta!*" cried the Minister of Foreign Affairs hotly. "He has insulted our President!" Swords flashed, and in two minutes a mass of fighting, snarling men swirled about them. Then suddenly the Montemurans broke and fled, outnumbered. "*Por Dios!*" shouted the officer from the turn of the road. "It is war to the death! Do you understand? San Cristobal shall pay!"

The expedition straggled up the road toward the statue of Peace, looming tremendous in the dark.

"If it be true," said Gonzalez, "and the Prince has indeed returned to San Cristobal—"

The Minister of Foreign Affairs shrugged. "It can very well be true. His Highness is of an impulsiveness extreme—"

"The young devil!" muttered Herr Baron von Loewenbrun. "*Ach, Gott*, what a chase he has led us!"

"Then we have done a good day's work in stirring up these pigs," said the President. "*Basta!* It constitutes a *casus belli*. . . . And with the friendship of His Imperial Majesty . . . *Carramba!* There is a territory of silver deposits that I would gladly annex from Incana—not to speak of a lake in Montemura."

The Minister shivered. "We approach the meeting place of the three republics," he said. "We had better be on our guard. One does not know what Incana may do. You will remember in the last war—"

As they passed beneath the statue Gonzalez breathed a sign of relief. "At last we are within our own territory."

"It is well, nevertheless, to keep watch," said the Minister. "Do not forget the mouth of the *arroyo*."

Starlight bathed the road with ineffable light. Santa Maria towered magnificently above. The chill bit through them; but they felt that a brave day's work had been accomplished. The Minister lifted up his voice in song: "Oo, la-la-la-la," but stopped almost immediately. They jogged on contentedly, while President Gonzalez pictured in his mind's eye the Prince, seated at the Presidential buffet in the Hotel de la Paz, consuming Scotch whiskey and radiating benevolence toward San Cristobal.

And then, just at the mouth of the *arroyo*, his horse stopped so suddenly as almost to pitch him over his head.

"What is that?" said the President, chills running up his back.

A horse snorted—another plunged and reared. "An ambushade!" cried one or two troopers, wheeling. But the President was not so easily daunted. He peered into the shadows, discerning there a man, motionless in the middle of the road, who seemed to be leaning against a rock, stiffly, with legs wide apart.

"Who goes there?" cried Gonzalez in a trembling voice. "Answer or I fire! Who goes there?"

"*Madre de Dios!*" said the Minister suddenly, clapping his hand to his head. "Hold—"

But too late. Gonzalez's revolver leaped from its saddle holster; then came a roar that echoed preternaturally among the great rocks. The figure slumped forward to the ground. The troopers stood with

ready carbines, awaiting the assault that they were sure would come. With a low moaning sound the Minister had slipped from his saddle and was running toward the body.

"Look out!" cried the President. "It is a trap!"

But the Minister of Foreign Affairs knelt beside the dead man, scratching a match. The flame spurted—the match fell from his fingers, the Minister of Foreign Affairs crumpled up and fell on his face. An unreasoning panic seized Gonzalez. He got slowly off his horse, followed by the Baron. "Fainted!" said the Baron curiously. "I wonder—"

But the President had also lit a match at the dead man's face. He staggered back with a dreadful cry: "The Prince!"

"*Ach, Gott!*" barked the Baron. "You have killed him!"

THE TREASURE

by C. Y. Harrison

GLANCING about him, but still running rapidly he rounded the corner at full speed. He paused for a moment and then ran to the outskirts of the town. He stopped and took stock of himself. Terror was outlined on every feature of his face. Night had fallen and the trees cast hideous and fearsome shadows.

"I must get there before anyone discovers it," he thought. Looking around again, he fancied that he saw something dart behind that big black rock. Who could it be? Someone was following him! His heart beat more rapidly at every passing moment. His body quivered. Inwardly he wished he had not acted so rashly in burying it in a spot where anybody might discover it by accident.

Yes, he would walk on very slowly, so that no one might suspect him. One must use discretion in a matter of this nature!

He walked until he reached the border of a clump of trees and bushes. He took a final glance about him and entered the woods.

Ah! now for the end of this confounded affair. Yes! there is the spot over there by that big moss-covered tree.

He fell to digging feverishly, and at last he struck it. At last, with a joyful bark, he seized the bone, and ran off with his tail wagging.

THE GIRL WHO COULDN'T GO WRONG

by *Albert Payson Terhune**

RAEGAN told it to me.

For a short, happy space in his mottled career, Raegan had been a settlement worker. But someone in charge was so base as to accuse him of a greater interest in the working than in the settlement. And he had departed—with a grievance and several more negotiable mementoes.

It was during the "Minimum Wage for Working Girls" legislation that I ran across Raegan. What or whom he was doing at the Capital I never clearly knew. I had a fine idea for an epigram which, if I could whittle it into scintillant, mordant keenness, I intended to embody somewhere in my wage story.

It was to the effect that the same low pay scale which keeps girls from being respectable keeps men from being anything else.

I rather fancied this statement of a double standard in the relation of poverty to goodness. And, in the first glow of inspiration, I repeated it to Raegan. Of course he did not grasp the idea. And when I put it in more and simpler words he flatly contradicted me. The fact that my pretty catch phrase could be proven untrue pleased me immensely. For it proved the thing an epigram.

I told Raegan so. But, perhaps thinking I was arguing the case, he undertook at some length to prove me wrong. Then, by way of illustration, he told me the following tale—gleaned during his brief, bright settlement experience. I do not vouch for it. Nor do I wholly know what it proves. But this I do know: it proves *something*. That is not an effort to be funny, but the statement of a solemn certainty. And wiser folk than I are at liberty to find the proof.

No (began Raegan), you're dead wrong when you spring that puzzle picture speech about girls finding it hard to live up to their Elsie book just because they're broke. Often as not, they find it harder to do anything different. Being broke is the very thing that keeps them in line. And Maudie Kirk's case cinches that.

* This is one of a series of the famous Raegan stories written by Mr. Terhune for *The Smart Set*. They were never collected in book form. Mr. Terhune later became famous for his stories about dogs.

There're two halves to Maudie's story. The first half reads like all the dreary, Heaven-Will-Protect-the-Working-Gail wheezes ever ground out. The second half isn't quite like anything else I've happened to run across.

Maudie came to New York from one of the "small time" towns that have names like a Roman general and populations like a road company Roman mob. I don't remember just what line of honest endeavor her father had chased. But there's no doubt he *was* honest. For he died, leaving a bedridden widow and Maudie and—after the M.D. and M.A. (why, Mortuary Assistant, of course) had taken theirs—about a hundred dollars.

That meant the bell had rung for Maudie to listen to the factory whistle. And, being a dutiful kid, she listened. There was no chance, up in her own bailiwick. So she hearkened to the call of the city. There were jobs to be had in New York. And a girl could live here on almost nothing, if she knew the right sort of food and clothes—and let them alone.

And she could send all her spare savings up-State to pay board for Mother, who was deposited at Uncle Barney's, on the Pompton road, at three fifty a week. Some money, in those parts, I'm told!

So Maudie came to New York. She was no fluff skulled Maid of Yaphank, to be lured or otherwise pleasurably excited by the hidden perils of the Big City. Not she. She knew what to steer clear of and why to steer clear of it. She was a good girl, clear down to her number six soles. And level-headed. And equipped with an 1840 New England conscience. Why, on form alone, you could have backed Maudie to go around the track six times without leaning over the rail once to crop any infield grass.

"I know what the city is," she told her mother, as she finished brailing the telescope bag and double-reefed the ancestral umbrella. "And I know the traps it holds for fools. I know, too, that a good, sensible, self-respecting girl can always make her way anywhere. So don't worry your precious old self about me."

Good talk, what?

So to New York came Maudie. And what's more, she got a job—after a while. It was in the basement (plus two) of a department store. The section that never is intruded on by Customers, Daylight or Real Air. And they paid her \$5.50, as a starter. Just for pottering around pretty steadily from eight to six thirty, with very near twenty whole minutes off for lunch—sometimes.

Part of the while she was able to send home the three fifty a week for Mother's board. And part of the time she did it, anyway, by working overtime. You see, it was one of those generous stores that allow their girls overtime pay, except at the busy season.

Well, for a couple of months or so Maudie was pretty near as happy and carefree as a blind mule on a treadmill. Then there was a cut-down. And the bulk of the new girls were let out. Maudie was among the bulk. And by this time she'd trained off a whole lot of loose flesh that she didn't need.

But, bless you, even when her first landlady locked the door on her and lost the key, Maudie was as plucky as ever. And just as dead sure as ever that a good, self-respecting girl could win her way along the straight road—even if there were a few stray bumps therein, to keep the liver from getting torpid.

Next, after a kind of long stage wait, she got her chance in a steam laundry, at six per. No overtime. But she scalded her face and arms pretty badly one day in a steam escape. And by the time she got back from the hospital the laundry people had decided she was a hoodoo, and wouldn't take her on again.

Through the Y. W. C. A. (where she used to get weekly thrills by listening to those startling lectures on "Child Widows of India," and "How to Tell the Wild Flowers from the Birds") she annexed a nice general-housework job in a family of nine that kept boarders. The mistress was the grandniece, by marriage, of Simon Legree. She paid Maudie fourteen dollars a month and kept her from taking on fat. But Maudie fainted one day, when there was company. And she was fired. You see, they wanted a strong girl.

Did she lose her faith in that splendid Self-Respect wheeze? She did not. She still shut her eyes and her ears to the Easiest Way and stopped eating for a while; and then landed a fine position in a sweatshop.

She lasted for nearly five months. Then the girls "walked out," she at their head. One of the papers called her a Joan of Arc and printed a snapshot of her. The other girls got back. Maudie didn't.

Being a member of the Arc family isn't on the free list.

Then came a spell when there was no work. At least none for Maudie. The day that the last member of the Dollar Family quitted lodging with her a letter came from Uncle Barney. It said, among a lot of other demonstrative things, that Mother's board money must be paid up in full or the old lady must get out.

There was a poorhouse handy, went on Uncle Barney, with his inimitable dry wit, and he wouldn't grudge giving Mother a free drive there. He enclosed the doctor's bill for \$98.60. And at the bottom the big-hearted old family physician had scrawled a line to the effect that he'd pay no more calls till a full settlement was forthcoming. Uncle Barney's love letter wound up by mentioning that Mother was some worse.

The letter got to Maudie Kirk on Christmas evening, early.

She read it all through a couple of times. Then she read again what the doctor had to say. After that, she crossed her room (one step did it) to the looking glass. The glass showed back about the sorriest-looking hall-bedroom in the City of Hallrooms. The landlady had been soft-hearted, because Christmas was near, and she had told Maudie she needn't get out till New Year's.

Well, over to the glass went Maudie. It was a flawed glass at that. But it served her all right as an audience. She looked into it. And she began to speak, out loud, to the girl there.

"I've given it a fair trial," she said. "I came here strong in my faith that self-respect and willingness to work would carry a woman safe to success. I've slaved like a dog. And I've starved. I've given Decency all the chance it could want. I've lived as Mother would have wanted me to live. And I've suffered as she couldn't understand, if I told her. And what's come of it?

"I can't get work. I can't get food. I can't get the money that will keep Mother out of the poorhouse. I can't get any of those things honestly and decently. If I was the only one concerned, I wouldn't care. But Mother is going to have a home and a doctor's services.

"*She's going to have them.* And I'm going to get them for her. I've read a lot about a girl not needing to go crooked just because she's poor. And it's a lie. A silly lie. I've tried the heaven path. And it's bumped me into a stone wall. Here's where I go to hell!"

And just as carefully and as honestly as she had toiled heavenward, she set out to trip the Short-Cut, Down-Grade route. She planned it all out. But she overlooked one bet. She'd been too busy orating at herself in the glass to pay any sort of notice to what that same glass had to say in come-back. If she had, she might—or she mightn't—have noticed a few things:

First, that ten months of systematic starving had taken everything off her body but the bones; and had tried to square itself by making

those twice as large. Second, that the eyes had gone hollow. Not with dark, fancy shadows, but with a burnt-hole-in-a-blanket effect.

Likewise her face was greasy and so was her hair. Hers was mouse-colored hair at best, and it had got thin and stringy and it was strained back. The only dress she had left was grease-spotted and shiny and darned. It had never been anything that Worth or Paquin would have thrown a fit over. And now it had lost whatever it had started with. Her shoes, too—well, never mind her shoes. And she had no gloves. Her hat, by the way, wasn't much the better for about forty rains that had landed on it since she had hocked the family umbrella.

Yes, sir, that was the general blue print front elevation of the damsel that had set out to go wrong. But off she started. She had pluck.

She sneaked out of her boarding house, and hit Broadway about eight o'clock. There's apt to be several people around at that hour of the evening. 'Specially Christmas night.

Maudie was resolved on her Hades trip, all right. But she didn't quite know the road. So up Broadway she started. She'd always scuttled along the streets like a scared little hen, with her eyes fixed, purely, on her feet, ever since she had struck New York. But tonight she acted up real brazen. She walked slow along the Big Blonde Path, eyes high, manner heroic and her heart hammering up in her poor thin throat.

From Thirtieth Street to Fiftieth she strolled. Then back again as far as Fortieth. Nothing happened. Just nothing at all. She couldn't understand. She'd heard about girls who walked Broadway. She'd just walked it. And she might as well have been stepping down to the store from Uncle Barney's house.

Something was wrong, somewhere. She couldn't guess what, till she saw a squab just in front of her drift dreamily alongside a fat man who looked as if his name belonged on a Rhine Wine List, and say something to him as she passed. Maudie could only catch the word "Dear." It sounded rather free-and-easy for a total stranger. But it seemed to be the thing to do.

So up to a dapper little fur-coated man sidled Maudie. She tried to say "Dear," too. But the word stuck. The man looked at her, kind of cross. Then he grunted:

"This is Panhandleville all right. Fifth touch in six blocks. Oh, well, it's Christmas!"

And he flipped her a dime. Maudie gathered it up. Dimes had a

market value, even if souls hadn't. Then she stood looking after him, all choked and white. He'd taken her for a beggar. Not for a Seductive Delilah at all. But just for a Christmas Night beggar.

Next time there was no chance for any mistake like that. She said "Dear," to the red-faced clubman who lurched toward her out of a side canyon. She said it right out loud. Pretty near hollered it. He stopped dead short with his mouth open. Maudie backed away a bit. She didn't know what was the next thing to say. Besides, he reeked of booze. But she got fresh hold of her courage and said "Dear" again. She said it the way McGraw coaches the runner on third.

The man let out a roar of laughter.

"Oh, if the boys could see!" he sniggered, hopeless-like. "And they'll never believe me! On Broadway, too!"

He hailed a taxi and rolled aboard it, still roaring. Maudie took a kind of bashful step toward the taxi. But he howled to the meter brigand to put on double speed, and slammed the door.

The next man told her to go get a new face. The next said the Scarecrows' Home ought to keep earlier closing hours. And so on, all the way down the line. It was raining, too. Once a cop saw her at work and he laughed himself sick. You see, the happy Christmas spirit was abroad.

The only job that is supposed to pay the amateur better than the professional followed the example of all the other jobs Maudie Kirk had looked for. Gee, but it must have been tough for a girl, with Maudie's conscience, to cut loose and turn her back on all she held holy—and then be refused the chance of profit by it. As if when old Faust offered to swap his soul, the red basso devil had carolled, "Nothing doing!"

A night's sleep gave her some new courage. And she made up her mind to try again. Women of That Kind wore ropes of gems and rode in limousines and had the sort of flat they call "Bijou"—whatever that means. Maudie had read so. Also, the wicked city was swarming with men who were eager to prey on defenseless womanhood. She'd read that, too. So she couldn't see where she'd failed.

She hadn't read—because nobody's yet had sense or nerve enough to write it—that the average plain working girl has about as many temptations in New York as she has on a desert island. And that at best—or worst—such a girl's unlawful earning wouldn't keep her in carfare. But where's the living girl who doesn't snuggle to her heart the belief

that she could rake in a fortune if only she chose to be wicked? And, after all, Glass is as precious as Diamonds—until one tries to sell it.

Maudie planned a new angle of attack. There is a famous "Red-Haired Siren" whose lures captivate Wall Street and who is by now richer than John D.

Poor Maudie had heard about her. Everybody has heard about her. Except perhaps Wall Street.

The Street was screaming next day over a story that nobody really believed. A story about a thin, ragged-looking wreck of a woman—most likely batty—who had managed to get past the sleepy door guard into old Cyrus Q. Spillaker's private office and had stammeringly hailed the old geezer as "Dear"—just before the whole working office staff had industriously run her out.

Well, it took Maudie Kirk just two days to learn—she was no fool—that she could no more go to hell than she could to Mars. Morally, she was a goner. For she'd said good-bye to Goodness and Decency and Conscience. Said good-bye to them, out loud, in front of her looking glass. But she'd never since had a chance to make that farewell anything but a solo. And she knew now that she never could.

That was about dusk, two days after Christmas.

A couple of hours later, a tug captain off East Twenty-sixth Street boathooked a bunch of sleazy clothes that had just hopped off the dock with a starved woman inside of them.

Maudie couldn't even score a success as a drowner. The captain lugged her to Bellevue, and pretty soon she came around and began to eat. She had a few months' arrears of food to make up. And she sure did her best at it.

You know young Galahad Templar? Sure you do. He runs the Settlement. He has all the cash that's fit to coin. And he spends it on the Uplift of his fellow man and woman. Fits up the Settlement gallery with pre-cubist pictures to elevate their souls, and has long-haired woplets from the Metropolitan and Carnegie Hall come down once a week to show them how Tschaikowsky really ought to be rendered. It's a big help to East Siders with rabbit families, I can tell you. Why, lots of them can tell a Corot from a Greuze and the "Largo" from Raff's "Spring Song."

Well, Templar happened to be on his monthly philanthropic butt-in at Bellevue when Maudie Kirk was brought there. He got interested in as much of her story as she could tell him between eats (we got the

whole of it from her later at the Settlement), and he pulled wires to have her ambulated over to his Settlement House.

Say, it was a miracle what a few weeks of rest and real food and warm clothes and a few dozen baths and shampoos did to that girl's appearance. And when she was all well again and plump and kind of pretty and winsome, Templar paid her mother's bills and found her a fine easy fifteen a week job in the office of one of his chums. She'd got a fair start at last, poor kid!

Did she hang onto *that* job? I'm sorry you had to ask such a question.

And I'm pained, something terrible, to say she didn't. Templar was so proud of his work of reformation that he—well, last time I heard of them, he'd gotten her a nice comfortable little morgantic flat uptown, somewhere, near the park. The sort of flat they call "Bijou"—whatever that means.

LILITH

by Louis Untermeyer

He answered to her wildness and the fresh

Lure of her wanton flesh . . .

"May Death withhold his hands till I have been

Unpenitent and glad, exulting in
Some splendid sin.

"Give me your lips again, your hands so frail,

Your beauty, young and pale;

Your eyes that tremble like a startled wren!

Here is my solace; here all wisdoms fail;
Here is more strength than in a world of men—
Your lips—again . . ."

Then, like a flame, the madness leaped and died;

Passion grew hollow-eyed.

Her voice no longer swayed; the music thinned.

And as, with sickening soul, he turned aside,
The moon, a goblin riding on the wind,
Peered down and grinned.

THE SATURDAY NIGHT BLUES

by Catharine Brody

I

SOME publicity agent for the antisuffrage organization should have heard Alice Crane Barker tell Mr. Pendleton why she had married. A benign and florid face edged with white hair gave Mr. Pendleton the look of a business-like angel, which further acquaintance bore out. He liked to simulate an angelic—sometimes troublesomely angelic—interest in the affairs of his employees.

Certain eyebrow-raising details had reached him regarding the hasty marriage of Alice Crane Barker. Gus Barker, it appeared, was one of those people who are predestined to go through life on the charge-and-dun plan, and, as no one who had had five minutes' acquaintance with Alice Crane Barker would have suspected her of marrying for love, it was natural that Mr. Pendleton should bluntly hunt for information, much as a doctor hunts for the fallible part of one's back, by administering a series of conversational punches.

"I'll be gosh darned! What makes you women marry for, anyway?" In this way he received Alice Crane's intimation that there was no danger of a collision between her job and her marriage. "If your husband couldn't provide for you, whaddye get married for?"

"For protection," returned Alice Crane equably.

Fortunately the spectacle of Alice Crane Barker, who on occasion presented to the world a surface as smooth and hard and unimpressible as that of a polished agate, needing protection, moved Mr. Pendleton to give vent to a series of crescendo chuckles. Then his eye lighted on the first letter of the morning's mail and he straightway forgot all about his self-sufficient secretary.

Alice Crane went on looking through the cabinet under "A" for the folder of Acorn & Co., who had just complained of their last shipment.

She moved shapely, square hands, unornamented except for a wedding ring, among the contents of the drawer. Her square, healthy, pale face, with the frank blue eyes and the firm mouth, her flat bright hair, the high-collared crêpe de chine shirtwaist, the assured swing of her hips and the erect carriage of her head—all implied some sly sarcasm lurking in the avowal of her need of a protector, like a pin mischievously hidden in the chair of a schoolmaster.

She had said "protection" on the spur of the moment. It was inade-

quate to express the mingled considerations which prompted Alice Crane to consent to become Alice Crane Barker. She never hastily o.k.'d a letter for filing or hurriedly ironed a handkerchief, but she married Gus Barker in the wink of an eyelash, on the Monday after the Friday night that she had, after due reflection, decided to cast him out of her mind forever. Saturday made the difference.

Alice Crane lived in one of those out-at-heels brown stone houses which hold their comfortable own among the upstart ten-story white bricks in Central Park West. Gus Parker met her at the door one Friday night. Gus wore clothes impeccably, had a straight profile of which an amber pipe seemed to be an inseparable part, and cropped his hair very close. He affected the athletic type as much as a shipping clerk can.

"I've got another raise," announced Alice Crane, after the preliminary "Hellos "

Gus took his pipe out of his mouth and looked sour. He carried definite news from his old man to the effect that Gus wasn't worth another penny to the firm and wouldn't get one, by gad!

"You women get away with it all right," he said bitterly. "Like the fellow said in the paper, all a girl needs is taking eyes and a giving mouth to get ahead."

He stuck his pipe back in the corner of his mouth.

When a girl has been engaged to a man for an indefinite period and sees every prospect of continuing engaged for a still more indefinite period, the sting of the hornet is more likely to be among her accoutrements than the love-shafts of Cupid.

"Why don't you go into the advice on how to get ahead in business!" sneered Alice Crane. "You've got the main requirement to make a fortune that way. You certainly know what not to do."

They quarreled, disdainfully on Alice Crane's part, resentfully on his.

"What in goodness would I marry you for?" spoke up Alice Crane. "We're not kids of sixteen to be head over heels in love. I can support myself twice as well as you can. I can give myself a good time, everything I need and my freedom into the bargain. Is there anything a man like you can offer a girl like me?"

If the question had been put to a country-store-outfitted Gus at the back door of a farmhouse, he would have scratched his head and gaped. These primordial expressions being taboo in the city, Gus removed his pipe once more and glared.

"I've heard that before," he pronounced, outraged. "Think you got everything, don't you? Just the same, there'll be a time when you'll give everything just to have a man! I know you women."

The baleful glare of Alice Crane struck and blighted him as the glare of the hot sun withers a violet. His jaw, upon which long years of following-the-leader in work, dress, food and thought had left its mark, the prettified shoulders of the office worker, the narrow waist of the dandy, the surprise-proof eyes of the New Yorker—her glance meaningly swept and obliterated them all.

She stopped at the last button of her gloves, opened the front door and glanced over her shoulder.

"When that time comes, we'll meet again," she snapped.

She slammed the door. It was her adieu, farewell, the "we part forever" of grand opera.

II

No one who knew Alice Crane would be so far misled as to suppose that she wept half the night over what looked like a separation even more interminable than the long engagement. She never even thought of shedding a quiet tear or two in a corner of her immaculate handkerchief, and the idea of dropping them on her pillow would have been distasteful in the extreme. Alice Crane was a scrupulously neat person.

On Saturday morning, however, her smooth bearing was a trifle ruffled. She grumbled at the telephone operator; she grimaced impatiently over Mr. Pendleton's 'innumerable fussinesses; she wondered audibly with the bookkeeper over the sheerness of the stenographer's georgette waist. In short, Alice Crane was not herself.

At one o'clock she collected her salary, rolled down the top of Mr. Pendleton's desk, slammed her own, dabbed her nose reflectively with a powder-puff before a pocket mirror, jammed on her hat, buttoned her coat briskly, caught the down-going elevator at a run and a shuffle, and stood poised at the head of the stairs in front of the building.

She generally met Gus on Saturday afternoons and had a lingering luncheon with him—latterly she had considered paying her share of the bill. They parted at the door of the restaurant, he to disappear into mysterious masculine haunts with the boys, she to shop or freshen up her dress and her disposition for the evening.

Saturday nights they went to the theater, varying it slightly with vaudeville shows or even motion pictures when the source of Gus's

finances was as dry as the Great American Desert. When that source was profuse as a millionaire's private stock—this happened occasionally during the racing seasons—they finished with a sparing midnight supper in one of the less conspicuous cafés or partook of a before-the-show table d'hôte dinner in one of the less well-known hotels. They quarreled through it all, with sharp irony on Alice Crane's part, with flaring resentfulness on the part of Gus. Yet every Saturday night they went religiously through the same form, ending with final reconciliation at Alice Crane's door.

As she maintained her equilibrium at the head of the stairs in spite of the headlong rush of telegraph boys, brokers' clerks, pimple-faced youths with small eyes, square-chinned youths with hard eyes, and all the other ants that swarm over the anthill of lower Broadway, Alice Crane determined that her amusements would not be curtailed by the absence of Gus Barker. She decided against a *matinée* in favour of an evening performance of some play. There should be, according to all the laws of nature, more comfort in being alone than with a person who scrapped intolerably.

She planned to have preliminary tea at one of the big hotels in the East Forties, newly built for the growing class of people who have just acquired things—furs, jewels or exquisite women—and like to show them off. She would go alone. She was in no mood to offer excuses or explanations to any of the few girls of her acquaintance.

So Alice Crane hunted up a subterranean cut-rate ticket agency, where she ordered a first balcony seat for a promising musical comedy. She was not in the drama mood, as any self-respecting heroine who had just separated from her lover necessarily would be, but in the musical comedy mood, as any tired business woman after a half-day of grilling office work would be.

"Two?" mumbled the clerk.

"One," said Alice Crane.

"One?" repeated the clerk, and favoured her with a stare out of pale eyes over a debonair nose and a mustache as light as a lemon fizz.

"I said so," she returned frigidly.

"Gee, I just bumped into an iceberg," sang the clerk to his fellow. "How's the weather at your end?"

He added a fatuous wink for Alice. It was not the most opportune opening for what had been planned as a defiantly pleasant day.

At three o'clock, after lunch and some perfunctory shopping, Alice

dragged exhausted feet over the heavily carpeted mezzanine floor of the big hotel.

The men who lounged there, revelling in soft armchairs and abundant cigarette trays, looked as if they had stepped out cool and calm and callous from a cellar advertisement. The women who accompanied them were of three classes: lightly rouged, moderately rouged, and expertly made up. The first were the school friends and childhood sweethearts; the second, wives; and the third, by far the larger part, were of a class that toils not nor spins nor has any visible and legal means of support, but manages to put the lilies of the field to envy notwithstanding. Alice, alone, watched them all, envying the women—envying them the quality of their skins, glossy as the coats of exquisitely kept race-horses, envying them the luxurious sheen of their clothes, the splendid appointments of their escorts.

A round-bellied little man with sharp black eyes spoke to a maid who stood and watched from a corner. The maid came and bent over Alice.

"Are you a guest of the hotel, madame?" she murmured suavely.

"Why, no, but I'm waiting here for tea," frowned Alice.

"Then I am sorry, madame, but you cannot wait here. We do not allow unescorted ladies to wait here. There is a special part of the mezzanine floor reserved for ladies."

"But I am waiting here for a friend."

"I am sorry, madame, but we do not allow unescorted ladies to wait here." repeated the maid inflexibly. The fat little man never took his sharp eyes off her.

As Alice left, her cheeks burning with the stifling heat of helpless indignation, she saw the maid bend over another girl, who raised a haughty, heavily powdered face. The girl's lips moved in explanation; the maid seemed to insist. Suddenly a man turned the corner and greeted the girl. She exclaimed her relief, while the maid backed away and apologized profusely.

"A man's a woman's card of admission anywhere," thought Alice Crane scornfully. She was too angry to think of having tea, as she went home to prepare for a carefully gay evening as recompense.

III

It was years since Alice Crane had had occasion to pay her own car-fare to the theater district on a Saturday night, and elbow her own

way through the peculiar Saturday night throngs, and cling to a strap alone in a car full of Saturday-nighters. The last are in a class by themselves. On week-day evenings a stray caterpillar is noticeable here and there among the butterflies—a man with a clay pipe in his mouth prepared for a dreary night of guarding other people's property or a drab woman bent to her toilsome evening of washing other people's floors. But on Saturday nights these, somehow, disappear. Saturday nights are dedicated to youth—youth rich in money because it has the fulness of the afternoon pay envelope pressing against the pocket, youth rich in time, because it has a whole day of reckless rest before it. This youth comes in pairs.

To Alice Crane it seemed as if the whole heterogeneous universe had evolved into a small world of twos with herself as the one desolate and isolated individual. She was as aloof in the crowded subway as a hermit gazing down from his solitary mountain hut on the gregarious life of a city.

She began idly to classify the groups in the world of twos. From one subway station came the buxom and over-dressed damsels of Harlem with their escorts, dark-haired and sharp-eyed, the future dress-goods manufacturers and clothing factory owners of the city. From another came slender, overgrown girls with floppy hats and matter-of-fact voices, with their escorts, blond and square, the furniture salesmen and shoe clerks of the city. And from another, carefully corseted women with costly clothes and still more costly faces and their escorts, smooth-faced, heavy-jowled, the sports, the race-track touts, the gayer fellows of the city.

The theater was even more of a hedged-in world of twos. The musical comedy world especially has its twos—to every hero his heroine; to every villain his adventuress; to every chorus girl her chorus man. A girl in a net dress sat on one side of Alice Crane, exchanging futilities with her escort; a girl in a cloth dress sat on the other side, exchanging banalities with hers. And on the stage the Thespian hero and heroine mixed futilities with banalities.

Slightly to the hither part of midnight the Thespian hero gathered his heroine in his arms and, by a kiss on the most intensively rouged portion of her lips, announced that the purpose of the play had been consummated and that the audience might go home with conscience at ease. Young men ploughed a way for their petticoated halves to glide through to the nearest cabaret or perhaps ice-cream parlour, or

maybe just the orangeade stand on the corner. Giggling girls moved forward in horizontal line formation. Then came Alice Crane endeavouring to preserve a guiltless air after her intrusion on the Saturday night world of twos.

For the life of her she could not help sidling along in the glaring shade of buildings. Each yellow electric bulb was the cattish eye of a shocked grandma coldly accusing, taunting, unforgiving. She thought two men leaning against a corner building had turned to look at her in the manner of the fat, sharp-eyed hotel detective. Striding away, she passed the subway station and, rather than turn back to face them again, she walked on to Columbus Circle.

By these gradations, we come to "Sandy," for whom in the intervals of taking care of the sparrow and clothing the lily, the Lord provides free pickings either on Columbus Circle or Blackwell's Island.

It was Columbus Circle for Sandy, pickpocket de luxe, tonight, and there he stood in a conveniently darkened corner adjacent to the Subway station, with his hat pulled down low to disclose only the tip of a nose and the stub of a cigar. As if luck had not been generous enough to Sandy that day, it gradually penetrated to the slit of a brain via the slit of an eye that a woman's flat, leather purse lay at his feet. With an agile twist he leaped upon it and began to transfer it to his pocket.

Alice Crane, feeling for an intangible purse and equally intangible carfare, turned back sharply and caught the rebound of Sandy's agility.

"That's my pocketbook," said Alice Crane in mild surprise.

"Go tell it to Sweeney," advised Sandy. There wasn't a sign of a blue-coat within Sandy's line of vision.

"Hand back that purse, or I'll call a policeman."

"You better shut your trap," menaced Sandy.

A few men on their way to the station paused with the vacuous curiosity of New Yorkers. To these Alice Crane appealed.

"Call a policeman, please. He's got my purse."

But they shrugged and stared indolently. It might be so and it mightn't. Besides, it was none of their business.

"But I tell you he has my purse. I can't get home. I haven't any carfare," cried Alice Crane. "Call a policeman. Somebody please call a policeman!"

"Aw, what's your game, sister?" sneered Sandy for the benefit of those within hearing and believing distance.

In the meanwhile he edged closer to the fringe of what had become a

fair-sized group. There are streets around Columbus Circle bearing the same proportion to it, in point of light, as do the country lanes to the village Main Street. They are convenient for the sudden disappearance of Sandy's kind in moments of dire need.

"You'll not get away with my pocketbook," snapped Alice decisively, and grasped Sandy's arm. He flung it aside and lunged at the crowd, which involuntarily broke. One man with a tardy sense of justice caught him.

"G'wan. Give back the lady's pocketbook."

"Whose got her pocketbook? You let me go."

Shaking the man off, as a mongrel shakes off a flea, Sandy made a dash for the security of the darkened streets. The crowd turned after him instinctively. The same instinct prompted a man with an amber pipe which seemed an indefinable part of his features to halt in his diagonal stroll across the Circle in the path of the fleeing Sandy, and to put out his hands and grab him.

"It's a lady's pocketbook he got," the forerunner of the heated crowd informed him.

"Ah, you shut up! I didn't take no pocketbook," whined Sandy.

Alice Crane came up here, her head down, her throat lumpy with exasperation.

"I dropped it and he picked it up," she gasped.

"I found it over there, and she says it's hers. How do I know it's hers? You let me go or I'll—I'll show you, you big stiff. I'll—"

"Dry up, now. Just give that pocketbook back," ordered the man, and as Alice Crane's head went up in amazement, he nodded reassuringly: "You'll get it back in a minute, Alice."

After Sandy had handed over the purse, receiving a shaking and his release, Alice Crane found herself clinging to Gus Barker's arm in a subway train stiflingly full of paired-off couples.

"Gus," she began wildly, "did I say you couldn't give me anything? Forget it! I'll marry you as soon as you say—Sunday, Monday, any time, if you promise one thing. I don't care about the love, honour and obey part, but you must promise to shield and protect me—from ticket sellers, hotel detectives, pickpockets, nasty looks, and the Saturday night blues—Amen."

THE LOTOS AND THE BOTTLE

by O. Henry*

THE consul was working leisurely on his yearly report. So many thousand bunches of bananas; so many thousand oranges and coconuts; so many ounces of gold dust, pounds of rubber, coffee, indigo and sarsaparilla—actually, both exports and imports were twenty per cent greater than for the previous year!

A little thrill of satisfaction ran through the consul. Perhaps the State Department, in reading his introduction, would—and then he leaned back in his chair and laughed. He was getting as bad as the rest of them. For the moment he had forgotten that the island of Tagalon is but an insignificant part of an insignificant republic lying along the byways of an unfrequented sea. He thought of the quarantine doctor, who subscribed for the London *Lancet*, expecting to find it reprinting his reports from Tagalon to the New Orleans Board of Health concerning the yellow fever germ. The consul knew that not one in fifty of his acquaintances in the States had ever heard of Tagalon. He knew that two men, at any rate, would have to read his report—some underling in the State Department and a compositor in the Public Printing Office. Perhaps the typewriter would notice the increase of commerce in Tagalon, and speak of it to an acquaintance.

He had just written, in his introduction, "most unaccountable is the supineness of our large exporters in permitting the French and German houses to practically control the trade interests of this rich and productive—" when he heard the hoarse tones of a steamer's siren.

Willard Geddie laid down his pen and picked up his Panama hat and umbrella. He strolled out of the consulate and by a devious but shaded way to the beach. The steamer was only the *Valhalla*, one of the regular line of fruit vessels, but half the population of Tagalon had gathered on the beach, according to their custom, to view it. There was no harbor in the island; vessels of the draught of the *Valhalla* anchored a mile from shore.

By reason of long practice the consul gauged his stroll so accurately that by the time he arrived on the beach the custom house officers had

* This is one of the first stories Sidney Porter ("O. Henry") ever sold. And it was one of the stories whose ready sale decided him to move from Pittsburgh to New York to try out a career as a writer. He was paid one cent a word for this and other stories.

already rowed out and completed their duties, and the ship's gig, bringing ashore the purser, was just grating on the shingle.

At college Geddie had been a treasure as a first baseman. He now closed his umbrella, stuck it upright in the sand, and stooped, his hands resting on his knees. The purser, burlesquing the pitcher's contortions, hurled at him with all his force the heavy roll of newspapers, tied with a string, that the steamer always brought for the consul. Geddie leaped high, and caught the roll with a sounding "thwack." The loungers on the beach laughed and applauded delightedly. Every week they expected that roll to be delivered and received in that same manner, and they were never disappointed. Innovations of any kind did not reach Tagalon.

Geddie rehoisted his umbrella and sauntered back to the consulate—a two-room wooden structure with a native built gallery of bamboo and nipa palm running entirely round it. A somewhat dingy stretch of starred and striped bunting hung from a pole above the door. One room was the official department; furnished chastely with a set of straight back cane chairs, a bamboo couch and a flat top desk covered with the papers of state. Pictures of the first and latest President hung against the wall. The other room was Geddie's living apartment.

It was eleven o'clock when he returned from the beach, and therefore breakfast time. Chanca, the Carib woman who cooked for him, was just serving the meal on a little table on the shady side of the gallery. It consisted of shark's fin soup, *aguacates*, stew of land crabs, breadfruit, a piece of broiled iguana, a freshly cut pineapple, claret and coffee.

The consul took his seat and unrolled with luxurious laziness his bundle of newspapers. Here in Tagalon for two days he would read of goings on in the world very much as we of the world read those whimsical contributions to inexact science that portray the doings of the Martians. When he had finished with the papers they would be sent on the rounds of the half-dozen English speaking families on the island.

The paper that came first into his hand chanced to be one of those bulky mattresses of printed stuff on which the readers of certain New York journals are supposed to take their Sabbath nap. Opening this, the consul rested it on the table and the back of a chair. Then he partook of his meal deliberately, turning the leaves from time to time and glancing idly at the contents. Presently he was struck by something

familiar in a picture—a half-page badly printed photographic reproduction of a vessel. Languidly interested, he leaned over for a nearer scrutiny and a view of the florid headlines of the printed half-columns below the picture.

Yes, he was not mistaken. The engraving was of the 800-ton steam yacht *Idalia*, belonging to "that prince of good fellows, Midas of the money market and society's pink of perfection, J. Ward Tolliver."

Slowly sipping his black coffee, Geddie read the lines beneath the picture. Following a listed statement of Mr. Tolliver's real estate and bonds came a description of the yacht's furnishings, and then the grain of news, no bigger than a mustard seed. Mr. Tolliver, with a party of invited guests, would sail the next day on a six weeks' cruise along the Central and South American coast and among the Bahama Islands. Among the guests were Mrs. Cumberland Payne and Miss Ida Payne, of Norfolk.

The writer, with the fatuous presumption of his ilk, had concocted a romance suited to the palates of his readers. He bracketed the names of Miss Payne and Mr. Tolliver, and all but read the marriage ceremony over them. He played coyly and insinuatingly on the strings of "*on dit*," "a little bird," "Madame Rumor" and "no one would be surprised," and ended with congratulations.

Geddie, having finished his breakfast, took his papers to the west gallery and sat there in his favorite steamer chair, with his feet on the bamboo railing. He lighted a cigar and looked out over the sea. He felt a glow of satisfaction at finding that he was so little disturbed by what he had read. Yes, he had conquered it. He could never forget Ida; but there was no longer any pain in thinking of her. When they had had that quarrel he had impulsively sought and obtained this far-off consulship filled only with the desire to retaliate on her by detaching himself from her world, and presence. He had succeeded thoroughly in the latter. For eighteen months he had been consul at Tagalon, and no word had passed between them. He sometimes heard briefly of her through his dilatory correspondence with the few friends to whom he still wrote. He could not suppress a little thrill of satisfaction that she had not yet married Tolliver or anyone else. But evidently Tolliver had not given up hope.

Well, it made no difference to him now. He had eaten of the lotos. He was happy and content in this land of perpetual afternoon. Those old days of eager life in the States seemed like an irritating dream. He

hoped Ida would be as happy as he was. This climate as balmy as that of distant Avalon; the fetterless, idyllic round of enchanted days; the life among this romantic, indolent people, full of music and flowers and low laughter; the witchery of the imminent sea and mountains, and the many shapes of love and magic and beauty that bloomed in the white tropic nights—with all he was more than content. Also, there was Paula O'Brannigan.

Geddie intended to marry Paula—if, of course, she would consent; but he was rather sure of her feeling toward him. Somehow he kept postponing his proposal. Several times he was quite near to it, but a mysterious something held him back. Perhaps it was only the unconscious conviction that the act would sever the last tie that bound him to his old world.

He could be very happy with Paula. None of the island girls could compare with her. She had spent two years at school in the States, and when she chose no one could detect any difference between her and the girls in Norfolk or Manhattan. But it was delicious to see her at home dressed, as she sometimes was, in the native costume, with bare shoulders and flowing sleeves.

Barnard O'Brannigan was the great merchant of Tagalon. He was more than well-to-do, living in a house of two stories, with furniture imported, every stick of it, from New Orleans. Paula's mother was a native lady of high Castilian descent, but with a tinge of brown showing through her olive cheek. The union of the Irish and Spanish had produced—as it so often has—an offshoot of rare beauty and vivacity. They were excellent people indeed, and the upper story of their house was ready to be placed at the service of Geddie and Paula as soon as he should make up his mind to speak about it.

In a couple of hours the consul tired of reading. The papers lay scattered about him on the gallery. Reclining there, he looked out on a veritable Eden. A clump of banana plants interposed their broad shields between him and the sun. The gentle slope from the consulate to the sea was covered with the dark-green foliage of lemon and orange trees just bursting into bloom. A lagoon pierced the land like a dark, jagged crystal, and above it pale ceiba trees rose almost to the clouds. The waving cocoanut palm leaves on the beach flared a decorative green against the slate of an almost quiescent sea. His senses were cognizant of brilliant scarlets and ochers amid the *vert* of the coppice, of odors of fruit and bloom and the smoke from Chanca's clay oven under

the calabash tree, of the treble laughter of the native women in the huts, the song of a robin, the salt taste of the breeze, the diminuendo of the faint surf running along the shore, and, gradually, of a white speck, growing to a blur, that intruded itself upon the slaty prospect of the sea.

Lazily interested, he watched this blur increase until it became the *Idalia*, steaming at full speed, coming down the coast. Without changing his position he kept his eyes on the beautiful white yacht, gliding swiftly nearer until she came opposite the little village of Tagalon. Then, sitting upright, he saw her float steadily past and on. Scarcely a mile of sea had separated her from the shore. He had seen the frequent flash of her polished brasswork and the stripes of her deck awnings—so much and no more. Like a ship on a magic slide, the *Idalia* had crossed the illuminated circle of the consul's little world and was gone. Save for the tiny cloud of smoke that she left hanging over the brim of the sea, she might have been an immaterial thing—a chimera of his idle brain.

Geddie went into his office and sat down to dawdle over his report. If the reading of the article in the paper had left him unshaken, this silent passing of the *Idalia* had done for him still more. It had brought the calm and peace of a situation from which all uncertainty had been eradicated. He knew that men sometimes hope without being aware of it. Now, since she had come two thousand miles and had passed without a sign, not even his unconscious self need cling to the past any longer.

After dinner, when the sun was low, Geddie walked on the little strip of beach under the cocoanuts. The wind was blowing landward, and the sea was covered with tiny ripples.

A miniature breaker, spreading with a soft "swish" on the sand carried with it something round and shining that rolled back again, as the wave receded. The next influx beached it again, and Geddie picked it up. It was a long-necked wine bottle of clear glass. The cork had been driven in tightly, level with the mouth, and the end covered with dark red sealing wax. The bottle contained what appeared to be a sheet of paper, half curled from the manipulation it had undergone while being inserted. In the sealing wax was the impression of a signet ring that Geddie knew well—a ring that Ida Payne always wore in preference to jewels of any sort. As Geddie looked at the familiar monogram of the letters, I. P., a queer sensation of disquietude went over

him. More personal and intimate was this reminder of her than had been the sight of the vessel she was on. He took the bottle to his house and set it on his desk.

Throwing off his hat and coat, and lighting a lamp, for the night had crowded precipitately on the brief twilight, he began to examine his piece of sea salvage.

By holding the bottle near the light and turning it judiciously he made out that it contained a double sheet of note paper filled with close writing; further, that it was of the size and color that Ida always used, and that, to the best of his belief, the handwriting was hers. The imperfect glass of the bottle distorted the rays of light, so that he could read no word of the writing; but certain capital letters, of which he caught comprehensive glimpses, were Ida's, he felt sure.

There was a little amused smile in Geddie's eyes as he set the bottle down and laid three cigars side by side on the desk. He fetched his steamer chair from the gallery and stretched himself on it comfortably. He would smoke those three cigars while considering the problem.

For it amounted to a problem. He wished he had not found the bottle; but the bottle was there. Why should it have drifted in from the sea, whence come so many disordering things, to disturb his peace?

In this dreamy land, where time seemed so redundant, he had fallen into the habit of bestowing much thought on unimportant matters.

He began to try himself with many fanciful theories concerning the story of the bottle, disposing of each in turn. Ships in danger of wreck or disablement generally sent such things out. But he had seen the *Idalia* not three hours before, safe and speeding. Girls at sea had been known thus to distribute bottled messages, in gratification of a mild and harmless sort of humor. But it was not characteristic of Ida to do such a thing. Suppose the crew had mutinied and imprisoned the passengers below, and the message was one begging for succor? But, premising such an improbable thing, would the agitated captives have taken the pains to fill four pages of note paper with carefully penned arguments for rescue?

Thus, by the process of elimination, he soon rid the matter of the more unlikely theories, and was—though aversely—reduced to the less assailable one, that the bottle contained a message to himself. She knew he was there; it must have been launched as the yacht was passing and the wind blowing fairly toward shore.

As soon as Geddie reached this half-conclusion a wrinkle came be-

tween his brows and a stubborn look settled round his mouth. He sat looking out at the giant fireflies traversing the narrow grass-grown streets.

If this was a message from Ida to him, what could it be save an overture toward a reconciliation? And if that, why had she not used the safe methods of the post instead of this uncertain and even flippant means? A note in an empty bottle, cast into the sea! There was something light and frivolous about it, if not actually contemptuous.

The thought stirred his pride and subdued whatever emotions had been resurrected by the finding of the bottle.

Geddie put on his coat and hat and walked out. He followed a street that led him along the border of a little plaza, where a band was playing and people were rambling care-free and happy. Some timorous señoritas scurrying past, with fireflies tangled in the jetty braids of their hair, glanced at him with dark provocative eyes. The air was languorous with the scent of jasmine and orange blossoms.

The consul stayed his steps at the house of Barnard O'Brannigan. Paula was swinging in a hammock on the gallery. She rose from it like a bird from its nest. The color came to her cheek at the sound of Geddie's voice.

He was charmed at the sight of her costume—a flounced muslin dress, with a little jacket of white flannel, all made with neatness and style. He suggested a walk, and they went to the old Indian well on the hill road. They sat on the curb, and there Geddie spoke. Certain though he had been that she would not say him nay, he was thrilled with joy at the completeness of her surrender. Here was a heart made for love and steadfastness. No caprice or questioning or captious standards of conventions here.

When Geddie kissed Paula at her door that night and walked toward his own house he was happier than he had been ever before. "Here in this hollow lotos land to ever live and lie reclined," seemed to him, as it has seemed to many mariners, the best as well as the easiest. His future would be an ideal one. He had attained a paradise without a serpent. His Eve was indeed a part of him, unbeguiled, and, therefore, more beguiling. It would be a happy day when he would cut that last slender filament that reached across the sea. Here should be Willard Geddie's home and his future. He had decided that tonight, and his heart was full of a serene, assured content.

Geddie went into his house whistling that finest and saddest love

song, "La Golondrina." At the door his tame monkey leaped down from his shelf and looked up at him, chattering briskly. The consul turned to his desk to get him some nuts he usually kept there. Reaching in the half-darkness, his hand struck against the bottle. He had forgotten it was there. Geddie was either startled or reminded into giving vent to something very near a mild oath.

He lighted the lamp and fed the monkey; then he took the bottle in his hand and walked down the path to the beach.

There was a moon, and the sea was glorious. The breeze had shifted, as it did each evening, and was now rushing steadily seaward.

Stepping to the water's edge, Geddie hurled the bottle far out into the sea. It disappeared for a moment and then shot upward twice its length above the water. Geddie stood watching it. The moonlight was so bright he could see it bobbing up and down with the little waves. Slowly it receded from the shore, flashing and turning as it went. The wind was carrying it out to sea. Soon it became a mere black speck, doubtfully discerned at irregular intervals, and then the mystery of it was swallowed up by the mystery of the ocean. Geddie stood on the beach, smoking, and looking out across the water.

Old Simon Early was a half-breed fisherman living in a hut close to the shore. He owned the sloop *Pajaro*, that was anchored to the little cove to windward.

Simon was wakened from his earliest nap by a voice calling him. Slipping on his shoes, he went outside. He saw one of the boats from the *Valballe* just landing on the beach. His name was called again, and he went down to the boat. The third mate of the *Valballe*, an acquaintance of Simon, was there with three sailors from the fruiter.

"Go up, Simon," said the mate, "and tell Dr. Parrish, at the hotel, or Mr. Wellesly, or anybody else you can think of that's a friend to Mr. Geddie, the consul, to come here right away."

"Saints of the skies!" said Simon sleepily. "Nothing has happened to Mr. Geddie?"

"He's under that tarpauling," said the mate, pointing to the boat, "and he's rather more than half drowned. We seen him from the *Valballe* nearly a mile out from shore, swimmin' like mad after a bottle that was floatin' on the water, outward bound. We lowered the gig and started for him. He nearly had his hand on the bottle when he give out and went under. We pulled him out in time to save him, maybe, but the doctor is the man to decide that."

"A bottle!" said the old man, rubbing his eyes. He was not yet fully awakened. "Where is the bottle?"

Driftin' on out there some'eres," said the mate, jerking his thumb toward the sea. "Get on with you, Simon."

A DECLARATION

by Jim Tully

I

LIFE, to me, is a mirror, moved three times by a transfer company. Every time a fellow tries to adjust it, he cracks it again.

There was a day when I worried a great deal about life. I accept it now. It is interesting, confusing, heartbreaking and bewildering. I have watched my ideals shrivel up like daisies under an African moon. I have loved women, and have watched them pass to other men and other dreams. More deceitful even than myself, and more subtle, they are now crooning the age-old songs in less sophisticated ears than mine. And the ears flap in joy and wonder. On the boobery of man floats the ego of the world.

II

I never did believe in God. I had it all figured out when I was still quite young. And, as a rule, I don't like clergymen—those puffers of platitudes while little children are hungry.

III

I have never believed in "working myself up" to any certain position. If one is clever, one gets by. If one isn't—what matter?

IV

As a boy in a small Ohio town, I was a magnificent drunkard. I have reformed since. Volstead and others were conniving to poison me. I believe in life, though; for there are a few things I should hate to leave. Meaning—

A white and blue dappled sea under the light of the moon—a woman

with brains—and a heart—A woman who thinks that I am a real writer—and that barring accident—I may not die with a knot under my left ear, but live to a troubled old age. For Irish dreamers are always troubled.

My beliefs are—vague and confusing. My sympathy is strong—and useless.

My heart goes out to the Wobblies—head-battered and bloody, facing the shrapnel of economic wars. I admire the miniature overalled Dantons who scream like the mad French eagle—"We must dare, and again dare, and forever dare!"

VI

I would join no lodge, or anything else for the betterment of mankind. I might consider something that would make them more picturesque. The mob is too moral. I do not like the mob. I had contempt for them when I was a tramp. I am still a snob. And yet, I'm considered a whale of a mixer.

VII

Now and then, when driven into a corner, Life slamming me all the while with lead in his gloves, I ache for a solace. So I turn to the woman mentioned a few lines above. But I have forgotten. She has left me since I began writing these lines.

VIII

I have been a pagan all my life. Yet—I like Christ, the Agitator. The cross must have hurt His shoulder. I have heard since that a nail of it stuck near His heart. A Jew friend of mind, a pawnbroker, told me about the nail. He believes in reincarnation. He was the fellow who handed Christ the sponge dipped in the bitter stuff. I believe his story at that. For he buys trinkets from old women with shawls on their heads. And he cheats them. He thinks his fellow pawnbroker, Jurgen, was the name of a modified milk.

However, I have always felt sorry for Christ. Out of twelve chosen friends—two doublecrossed Him. And the rest of them probably garbled His words. One should not choose friends among fishermen.

IX

Just what does life mean to me? I don't know. Fame is merely the prolonging of neighborhood gossip. Money—my happiest days were spent—broke—under the stars—a youthful hobo. Drink—damn Volstead! Men and women are only interesting when they're drunk. I mean the interesting ones. The rest are terrible at all times. They bore me—like attending an Artists' Ball in Greenwich Village.

I have lived greatly in my time, "touched flowers and furs and cheeks," and I have never met a man who was not a hypocrite. As I bulge my way up the ladder, though, I meet men who admit it. That helps.

X

My dream: a brown-skinned maiden on a still purple and yet undiscovered island. I have had everything else, I think. I would never run away from her as Frederick O'Brien did. Fred is a poor Irishman.

SONNET

by Ben Ray Redman

On fire for beauty, with sure hands and eyes
Conspiring toward perfection's end, he sought
Through lonely years that knew no compromise
To shape in marble what no man had wrought.
Missing the whole, he seized the better part
And knew, at last, that beauty stood ensnared.
He turned to men, contentment in his heart:
Some mumbled vaguely, others blankly stared.

There was in him, perhaps, some flaw: he fled,
Grotesquely broken, from the rack of pain.
No more alone . . . companioned by cold hate,
Twisted by bitterness, with hand and head
Intent on blasphemy, he wrought again . . .
And men, discov'ring him, acclaimed him great.

THE GREEN ELEPHANT

by Dashiell Hammett

I

JOE SHUPE stood in the doorway of the square-faced office building—his body tilted slantwise so that one thin shoulder, lodged against the gray stone, helped his crossed legs hold him up—looking without interest into the street.

He had stepped into the vestibule to roll a cigarette out of reach of the boisterous wind that romped along Riverside avenue, and he had remained there because he had nothing better to do. In fact, he had nothing else to do just now. Tomorrow he would revisit the employment offices—a matter of a few blocks' walk along Main and Trent avenues, with brief digressions into one or two of the interesting streets—for the fifth consecutive day; perhaps to be rewarded by a job, perhaps to hear reiterations of the now familiar "nothing in your line today." But the time for that next pilgrimage to the shrines of Industry, through which he might reach the comparative paradise of employment, was still some twenty hours away; so Joe Shupe loitered in the doorway, and dull thoughts began to crawl around in his little round head.

He thought of the Swede first, with distaste. The Swede—he was a Dane, but the distinction was too subtle for Joe—had come down to the city from a Lost Creek lumber camp with money in his pockets and faith in his fellows. When the men came together and formed their brief friendship only fifty dollars remained of the Swede's tangible wealth. Joe got that by a crude and hoary subterfuge with which even a timber-beast from Lost Creek should have been familiar. What became of the swindled Swede's faith is not a matter of record. Joe had not given that a thought; and had his attention been called to it he probably would have been unable to see in it anything but further evidence of the Swede's unfitness for the possession of money.

But what was vital to Joe Shupe was that, inspired by the ease with which he had gained the fifty dollars, he had deserted the polished counter over which for eight hours each day he had shoved pies and sandwiches and coffee, and had set out to live by his wits. But the fifty dollars had soon dribbled away, the Swede had had no successors;

and now Joe Shupe was beset with the necessity of finding employment again.

Joe's fault, as Doc Haire had once pointed out, was that he was an unskilled laborer in the world of crime, and therefore had to content himself with stealing whatever came to hand—a slipshod and generally unsatisfactory method. As the same authority had often declared: "Making a living on the mace ain't duck soup! Take half these guys you hear telling the world what wonders they are at puffing boxes, knocking over joints, and the rest of the lays—not a half of 'em makes three meals a day at it! Then what chance has a guy that ain't got no regular racket, but's got to trust to luck, got? Huh?"

But Joe Shupe had disregarded this advice, and even the oracle's own example. For Doc Haire, although priding himself upon being the most altogether efficient house-burglar in the Northwest, was not above shipping out into the Couer d'Alenes now and then to repair his finances by a few weeks' work in the mines. Joe realized that Doc had been right; that he himself was not equipped to dig through the protecting surfaces with which mankind armored its wealth; that the Swede's advent had been a fortuitous episode, and a recurrence could not be expected. He blamed the Swede now. . . .

A commotion in the street interrupted Joe Shupe's unaccustomed introspection.

Across the street two automobiles were twisting and turning, backing and halting, in clumsy dance figures. Men began to run back and forth between them. A tall man in a black overcoat stood up in one of the cars and began shooting with a small-caliber pistol at indeterminate targets. Weapons appeared in the other automobiles, and in the hands of men in the street between the two machines. Spectators scrambled into doorways. From down the street a policeman was running heavily, tugging at his hip, and trying to free his wrist from an entangling coat-tail. A man was running across the street toward Joe's doorway, a black gladstone bag swinging at his side. As the man's foot touched the curb he fell forward, sprawling half in the gutter half on the sidewalk. The bag left his hand and slid across the pavement—balancing itself as nicely as a boy on skates—to Joe's feet.

The wisdom of Doc Haire went for nothing. With no thought for the economics of thievery, the amenities or specialization, Joe Shupe followed his bent. He picked up the bag, passed through the revolving

door into the lobby of the building, turned a corner, followed a corridor, and at length came to a smaller door, through which he reached an alley. The alley gave to another street and a street-car that had paused to avoid a truck. Joe climbed into the car and found a seat.

Thus far Joe Shupe had been guided by pure instinct, and—granting that to touch the bag at all were judicious—had acted deftly and with beautiful precision. But now his conscious brain caught up with him as it were, and resumed its dominion over him. He began to wonder what he had let himself in for, whether his prize were worth the risk its possession had entailed, just how great that risk might be. He became excited, his pulse throbbed, singing in his temples, and his mouth went dry. He had a vision of innumerable policemen, packed in taxicabs like pullets in crates, racing dizzily to intercept him.

He got to the street four blocks from where he had boarded the street car, and only a suspicion that the conductor was watching him persuaded him to cling to the bag. He would have preferred leaving it inconspicuously between the seats, to be found in the car barn. He walked rapidly away from the car line, turning thankfully each corner the city put in his path, until he came to another row of car tracks. He stayed on the second car for six blocks, and then wound circuitously through the streets again, finally coming to the hotel in which he had his room.

A towel covering the keyhole, the blind down over the one narrow window, Joe Shupe put the bag on his bed and set about opening it. It was securely locked, but with his knife he attacked a leather side, making a ragged slit through which he looked into depths of green paper.

"Holy hell!" his gaping mouth exclaimed. "All the money in the world!"

II

He straightened abruptly, listening, while his small brown eyes looked suspiciously around the room. Tiptoeing to the door, he listened again; unlocked the door quickly and flung it open; searched the dark hall. Then he returned to the black bag. Enlarging the opening, he dumped and raked his spoils out on the bed; a mound of grey-green paper—a bushel of it—neatly divided into little soft, paper-gartered bricks. Thousands, hundreds, tens, twenties, fifties! For a long minute he stood open-mouthed, spellbound, panting; then he hastily covered

the pile of currency with one of the shabby grey blankets on the bed, and dropped weakly down beside it.

Presently the desire to know the amount of his loot penetrated Joe's stupefaction and he set about counting the money. He counted slowly and with difficulty, taking one package of bills out of its hiding place at a time and stowing it under another blanket when he had finished with it. He counted each package he handled, bill by bill, ignoring the figures printed on the manilla wrappers. At fifty thousand he stopped, estimating that he had handled one-third of the pile. The emotional seething within him, together with the effort the unaccustomed addition required of his brain, had by then driven his curiosity away.

His mind, freed of its mathematical burden, was attacked by an alarming thought. The manager of the hotel, who was his own clerk, had seen Joe come in with the bag; and while the bag was not unusual in appearance, nevertheless, any black bag would attract both eyes and speculation after the evening papers were read. Joe decided that he would have to get out of the hotel, after which the bag would have to be disposed of.

Laboriously, and at the cost of two large blisters, he hacked at the bag with his dull knife and bent it until, wrapped in an old newspaper, it made a small and unassuming bundle. Then he distributed the money about his person, stuffing his pockets and even putting some of the bills inside his shirt. He looked at his reflection in the mirror when he had finished, and the result was very unsatisfactory: he presented a decidedly and humorously padded appearance.

That would not do. He dragged his battered valise from under the bed and put the money into it, under his few clothes.

There was no delay about his departure from the hotel; it was of the type where all bills are payable in advance. He passed four rubbish cans before he could summon the courage to get rid of the fragments of the bag, but he boldly dropped them into the fifth; after which he walked—almost scuttled—for ten minutes, turning corners and slipping through alleys, until he was positive he was not being watched.

At a hotel across the city from his last home he secured a room and went up to it immediately. Behind drawn blinds, masked keyhole, and closed transom, he took the money out again. He had intended finishing his counting—the flight across the city having rekindled his desire to know the extent of his wealth—but when he found that he had bunched it, had put already counted with uncounted, and thought

of the immensity of the task, he gave it up. Counting was a "tough job," and the afternoon papers would tell him how much he had.

He wanted to look at the money, to feast his eyes upon it, to caress his fingers with it, but its abundance made him uneasy, frightened him even, notwithstanding that it was safe here from prying eyes. There was too much of it. It unnerved him. A thousand dollars, or perhaps even ten thousand, would have filled him with wild joy, but this bale. . . . Furtively, he put it back in the valise.

For the first time now he thought of it not as money,—a thing in itself,—but as money—potential women, cards, liquor, idleness, everything! It took his breath for the instant—the thought of the things the world held for him now! And he realized that he was wasting time, that these things were abroad, beckoning, while he stood in his room dreaming of them. He opened the valise and took out a double handful of the bills, cramming them into his pockets.

On the steps descending from the office to the street he halted abruptly. A hotel of this sort—or any other—was certainly no place to leave a hundred and fifty thousand dollars unguarded. A fine chump he would be to leave it behind and have it stolen!

He hurried back to his room and, scarcely pausing to renew his former precautions, sprang to the valise. The money was still there. Then he sat down and tried to think of some way by which the money could be protected during his absence. He was hungry—he had not eaten since morning—but he could not leave the money. He found a piece of heavy paper, wrapped the money in it and lashed it securely, making a large but inconspicuous bundle—laundry, perhaps.

On the street newsboys were shouting extras. Joe bought a paper, folded it carefully so that its headlines were out of sight, and went to a restaurant on First avenue. He sat at a table back in one corner, with his bundle on the floor and his feet on the bundle. Then with elaborate nonchalance he spread the paper before him and read of the daylight hold-up in which \$250,000 had been taken from an automobile belonging to the Fourth National Bank. \$250,000! He grabbed the bundle from the floor, knocking his forehead noisily against the table in his haste, and put it in his lap. Then he reddened with swift self-consciousness, paled apprehensively, and yawned exaggeratedly. After assuring himself that none of the other men in the restaurant had noted his peculiar behavior, he turned his attention to the newspaper again, and read the story of the robbery.

Five of the bandits had been caught in the very act, the paper said, and two of them were seriously wounded. The bandits, who, according to the paper, must have had information concerning the unusually large shipment from some friend on the inside, had bungled their approach, bringing their own automobile to rest too far from their victim's for the greatest efficiency. Nevertheless, the sixth bandit had made away with the money. As was to be expected, the bandits denied that there was a sixth, but the disappearance of the money testified irrefragably to his existence.

From the restaurant Joe went to a saloon on Howard street, bought two bottles of white liquor, and took them to his room. He had decided that he would have to remain indoors that night; he couldn't walk around with \$250,000 under his arm. Suppose some flaw in the paper should suddenly succumb to the strain upon it? Or he should drop the bundle? Or someone should bump heavily into it?

He fidgeted about the room for hours, pondering his problem with all the concentration of which his dull mind was capable. He opened one of the bottles that he had brought, but he set it aside untasted: he could not risk drinking until he had safeguarded the money. It was too great a responsibility to be mixed with alcohol. The temptations of women and cards and the rest did not bother him now; time enough for them when the money was safe. He couldn't leave the money in his room, and he couldn't carry it to any of the places he knew, or to any place at all, for that matter.

III

He slept little that night, and by morning had made no headway against his problem. He thought of banking the money, but dismissed the thought as absurd: he couldn't walk into a bank a day or so after a widely advertised robbery and open an account with a bale of currency. He even thought of finding some secluded spot where he could bury it; but that seemed still more ridiculous. A few shovels of dirt was not sufficient protection. He might buy or rent a house and conceal the money on his own premises; but there were fires to consider, and what might serve as a hiding place for a few hundred dollars wouldn't do for many thousand: he must have an absolutely safe plan, one that would be safe in every respect and would admit of no possible loophole through which the money could vanish. He knew half a dozen men who could have told him what to do; but which of them could he trust where \$250,000 was concerned?

When he was giddy from too much smoking on an empty stomach, he packed his valise again and left the hotel. A day of uneasiness and restlessness, with the valise ever in his hand or under his foot, brought no counsel. The grey-green incubus that his battered bag housed benumbed him, handicapped by his never-agile imagination. His nerves began to send little fluttering messages—forerunners of panic—to his brain.

Leaving a restaurant that evening he encountered Doc Haire himself.

"Hullo, Joe! Going away?"

Joe looked down at the valise in his hand.

"Yes," he said.

That was it! Why hadn't he thought of it before! In another city, at some distance from the scene of the robbery, none of the restrictions that oppressed him in Spokane would be present. Seattle, Portland, San Francisco, Los Angeles, the East!

Although he had paid for a berth, Joe Shupe did not occupy it; but sat all night in a day couch. At the last moment he had realized that the ways of sleeping-cars were unknown to him—perhaps one was required to surrender one's hand baggage. Joe did not know, but he did know that the money in his valise was not going to leave his hands until he had found a securer place for it. So he dozed uncomfortably through the ride over the Cascades, sprawled over two seats in the smoking-car, leaning against the valise.

In Seattle he gained no more liberty than he had had in Spokane. He had purposed to open an account with each bank in the city, distributing his wealth widely in cautious amounts: and for two days he tried to carry out his plan. But his nervous legs simply would not carry him through the door of a bank. There was something too austere, too official, too all-knowing, about the very architecture of these financial institutions, and there was no telling what complications, what questioning, awaited a man inside.

A fear of being bereft of his wealth by more cunning thieves—and he admitted frankly now that there might be many such—began to obsess him, and kept him out of dance-hall, pool-room, gambling-house, and saloon. From anyone who addressed even the most casual of sentences to him he fled headlong. On his first day in Seattle he bought a complete equipment of bright and gaudy clothes, but he wore them for only half an hour. He felt that they gave him an altogether too affluent appearance, and would certainly attract the atten-

tion of thieves in droves; so he put them away in his valise, and thereafter wore his old clothes.

At night now he slept with the valise in bed beside him, one of his arms bent over it in a protecting embrace that was not unlike a bridegroom's, waking now and then with the fear that someone was tugging at it. And every night it was a different hotel. He changed his lodgings each day, afraid of the curiosity his habit of always carrying the valise might arouse if he stayed too long in any one hotel.

Such intelligence as he was ordinarily in possession of was by this time completely submerged beneath the panic in which he lived. He went aimlessly about the city, a shabby man with the look of a harried rabbit in his furtive eyes, destinationless, without purpose, filled with forebodings that were now powerless except to deepen the torpor in his head.

A senseless routine filled his days. At eight or eight-thirty in the morning he would leave the hotel where he had slept, eat his breakfast at a nearby lunch-room, and then walk—down Second to Yessler Way, to Fourth, to Pike—or perhaps as far as Stewart—to Second, to Yessler Way, to Fourth. . . . Sometimes he would desert his beat to sit for an hour or more on one of the green iron benches around the totem in Pioneer Square, staring vacantly at the street, his valise either at his side or beneath his feet. Presently, goaded by an obscure disquietude, he would get up abruptly and go back to his promenade along Yessler Way to Fourth, to Pike, to Second, to Yessler Way, to . . . When he thought of food he ate meagerly at the nearest restaurant, but often he forgot to eat all day.

His nights were more vivid; with darkness his brain shook off some of its numbness and became sensitive to pain. Lying in the dark, always in a strange room, he would be filled with wild fears whose anarchic chaos amounted to delirium. Only in his dreams did he see things clearly. His brief and widely spaced naps brought him distinct, sharply etched pictures in which invariably he was robbed of his money, usually to the accompaniment of physical violence in its most unlovely forms.

The end was inevitable. In a larger city Joe Shupe might have gone on until his mentality had wasted away entirely and he collapsed. But Seattle is not large enough to smother the identities of its inhabitants: strangers' faces become familiar; one becomes accustomed to meeting the man in the brown derby somewhere in the vicinity of

the postoffice, and the red-haired girl with the grapes on her hat somewhere along Pine Street between noon and one o'clock; and looks for the slim youth with the remarkable moustache, expecting to pass him on the street at least twice during the course of the day. And so it was that two Prohibition enforcement officers came to recognize Joe Shupe and his battered valise and his air of dazed fear.

They didn't take him very seriously at first, until, quite by accident, they grew aware of his custom of changing his address each night. Then one day, when they had nothing special on hand and when the memory of reprimands they had received from their superiors for not frequently enough "showing results" was fresh, they met Joe on the street. For two hours they shadowed him—up Fourth to Pike, to Second, to Yessler Way. . . . On the third round-trip confusion and chagrin sent the officers to accost Joe.

"I ain't done nothing!" Joe told them, hugging the valise to his wasted body with both arms. "You leave me be!"

One of the officers said something that Joe did not understand—he was beyond comprehending anything by now—but tears came from his red-rimmed eyes and ran down the hollows of his cheeks.

"You leave me be!" he repeated.

Then, still clasping the valise to his bosom, he turned and ran down the street. The officers easily overtook him.

Joe Shupe's story of how he had come into possession of the stolen quarter-million was received by everyone—police, press and public—with a great deal of merriment. But, now that the responsibility for the money's safety rested with the Seattle police, he slept soundly that night, as well as those that followed; and when he appeared in the courtroom in Spokane two weeks later, to plead futilely that he was not one of the men who had held up the Fourth National Bank's automobile, he was his normal self again, both physically and mentally.

AN INCIDENT OF THE COSMOS

*by Paul Y. Anderson**

I

THREE famous men sat together—a physicist, a pathologist, a philosopher. A remote star twinkled through the window pane. The physicist, rugged, red-haired, brusque, lifted a cloth and disclosed a machine of simple appearance with a glass vacuum tube and an electric switch.

"I," he said, "have perfected a device for liberating and controlling atomic energy. From a single cubic inch of air sufficient power may be derived to perform the labor of London for a month. At last mankind is emancipated from the curse of labor."

"I," said the pathologist, elderly, ascetic and gentle, "have developed a standard serum which confers immunity to all diseases, together with a formula for arresting physical decay. Save for accident, man is redeemed forever from the curse of death."

"Life," declared the philosopher, a black-bearded colossus, agile with intellectual ferocity, "can be justified only by the pursuit of truth. I have found the one truth, which is that truth cannot be found, because there is no means of identifying it."

II

Many blocks away from the University, the colored lights glowed upon the swaying forms of dancers. A saxophone wailed, a drum thudded in monotone, and a girl with black hair and flushed cheeks asked her companions where they had hidden the gin. In a squalid hall room a woman drank three ounces of carbolic acid, and fell with a gurgling scream. A banker, donning silk pajamas, smiled as he reflected that on the morrow he would make ten thousand dollars by calling an old schoolmate's note. A youth with tremulous lips kissed a girl to seal their engagement; she sighed tenderly, and wondered if he would make as much money as she believed he could.

III

The philosopher stood brooding over the physicist's machine, his right hand touching the vacuum tube, his left near the switch.

* Mr. Anderson is now the brilliant Washington political correspondent of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

"Yes," repeated the physicist, "we have mastered infinite forces. If that tube were smashed, and this switch thrown, the earth would dissolve into electronic dust in approximately one-fifthousandth of a second."

"In me," muttered the philosopher, his eyes burning, "man attains the absolute idea. In me, he achieves the absolute act of will!"

IV

In a vast dwelling located upon an eminence of an outer planet in the solar system of Betelgeuse, a being of enormous stature, with a head as big as a piano, was looking through a telescope, the upper end of which was lost in the clouds.

"I was observing," he remarked to a similar being, "a slight disturbance on the fringe of the Minor Area in the adjoining universe. The third concentric satellite of Solar Unit No. 19288X appears to have exploded."

"Has it any particular significance?" she asked, idly.

"Oh, no. It happens about four times a week. How about supper?"

RUM, READING, AND REBELLION

*by John Macy**

I CAN endure patiently the aqueous dullness of dinners and the muffling of midnight joy. As we approach middle age, we find that revelry, even under the old sparkling conditions, is less charming than we once thought it; at least we can live cheerfully without it. But there is one placid, innocent pleasure, a pleasure mingled with enough moral and intellectual profit to give it dignity, which the lewd hand of prohibition has spoiled, almost destroyed. That is the pleasure of miscellaneous reading, the sweet delight of picking up any book one happens to pick up and surrendering to it in the chaste and peaceful security of one's own fireside. I rebel against the intrusion of the pro-

* The late John Macy's most famous work is *The Spirit of American Literature*. He was a critic and essayist.

hibitionist and his infernal laws into the sanctuary where I, a mere harmless reader, commune with better minds than mine.

The outrageous nature of this intrusion and the particulars of my complaint against it I shall set forth presently. But before I arraign prohibition from the reader's point of view, I wish to make some brief notes on the problem of the relation of alcohol to the author, to the creation of literature. The author comes before the reader, but their fortunes are inseparable; one would die without the other.

It is an unsettled question—let us be as fair as we can with the dubious evidence given us by physicians and psychologists—it is an unsettled question whether and to what extent alcohol helps or hinders the cerebral processes of the artist. The scientific facts are not established, and the biographical facts concerning most artists are fragmentary—in some cases veiled by the affectionate or prudish reticences of biographers, in some cases deliberately falsified, in most cases inconclusive. Mr. Cabell, speaking through his mask, Charteris, apropos Marlowe, says: "Whatever one might desire the case to have been, there is really no doubt that in the production of an astoundingly large number of masterpieces alcohol played the midwife." Well, I think there is some doubt, and I mistrust "astoundingly" as a too large word flung into the proposition by emotion and not by reason. Marlowe seems to have been a magnificent drinker, and the fact, if it be a fact, that he was killed in a tavern brawl confirms the case for him or against him. But we do not know whether he wrote when he was half loaded or whether he went on periodic sprees and worked hard between debauches in a state of austere sobriety. That many of his lines are splendidly wild and rush riotously among the stars proves nothing. The hottest lines may be written with a cool head. And a hot head may produce cold mush.

If we know nothing definite about Marlowe's habits day by day as drinker and writer, we know as little about the habits of his contemporaries. Did Ben Jonson, a man of pre-eminent sanity and industry, as his work shows, crook his powerful elbow every night or get boiled once a week? Did he have a stout constitution and a remarkably steady head? One thing we may assume: he and his companion poets in the Mermaid Tavern did not drink water all the time. But we can never know what effect alcohol had on their poetry. A century later there was just as much boozing, but there was less poetry.

Well into the nineteenth century drinking was taken for granted.

Everybody drank or did not drink according to his nature and tastes. It was not until the era of Victoria, who was descended from a noble line of colossal boozers, that biographers began to be morbidly inquisitive about the alcoholic capacity of great brains. To be sure, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries there were plenty of kill-joy Puritans; but when they attacked a man like Marlowe they damned him as an atheist and blasphemer, and said nothing about his cups. They were concerned with the major sins. There were cases of ethical hysteria and intellectual confusion, such as that of John Bunyan, a banal mind, a tedious pseudoallegorist, who did not know that making a solemn parody of imaginative passages in the Bible is a worse crime than playing tip-cat. There are fools in all centuries. But worry about other people's alcohol is a nineteenth century disease, a mild stomach trouble to begin with, developing in the twentieth century into dreadful forms of insanity.

II

In biographical literature alcohol does not cut much of a figure until the end of the eighteenth century. Let us glance at a few of the records, or what in biography pass for records:

ROBERT BURNS. Sincere two-handed booze-fighter. Stevenson says: "It is the fashion to say he died of drink; many a man has drunk more and yet lived with reputation and reached a good old age." Robert Louis was a fair performer himself. Probably got full more than once with Henley, who was a superb anti-Puritan. See Henley's "Let us be drunk and for a time forget." There are some touching sentences in a letter of Stevenson's to Henry James: "I have had to stop all strong drink and all tobacco. . . . I suddenly find that a glass of claret or a brandy-and-water give me a splitting headache the next morning. . . . I do not like to think of life without red wine on the table."

WORDSWORTH. Full once according to the "Prelude." Occasion seems to have been a Milton celebration! W. W. was a famous skater all his life, but on ice.

COLERIDGE and DEQUINCEY. Preferred opium. Cases remind one of Browning's lines in "Clive":

*Noticed how the furtive fingers went
Where a drug-box skulked behind the bonest liquor.*

KEATS. Liked wine. Verses full of it. Too bad he did not live to drink barrels of Italian vintages. Prudes have made much of his boyish decla-

ration that he liked to put pepper on his tongue and let wine run over it. "Beaded bubbles winking at the brim." Can you beat it?

BYRON. Copious, gay and melancholy drinker. High old times at his house. Says that in the morning he used to wring the necks of many bottles of sparkling water.

LAMB. Consistent gin-guzzler. Wrote "Confessions of a Drunkard." Fools took it too seriously. Came back with "Confessions of a Water Drinker." See in Colvin's enlarged Life of Keats, published two or three years ago, an account of a party including Keats, Hunt, Wordsworth and Lamb. Lamb tight, funny, and bored. Colvin, a pretty sensible biographer and not, on the whole, a moralistic ass, cannot refrain from saying that Lamb was "alas!" under the influence. Why "alas!"? Lamb lived to be fifty-nine, was efficient at a clerical job for many years, and wrote and read at night. Knew just a little bit about books and about the art of writing. Wouldn't you like to have been at that party? And don't you wish you had some of the kind of gin that Lamb drank?

DICKENS. Jolliest praiser of punches in all English literature. Guess he knew how they tasted. No hint of drunkenness. A prodigious worker.

THACKERAY. Probably had a good time in Paris and even in London. No very definite record. Shows more sympathy for Richard Steele, a confirmed rounder, than for any other of the "English Humorists."

CARLYLE. A grouch. An exception to Stevenson's assertion that Scotland is a drunken country.

RUSKIN. Tut! Tut!

FITZGERALD. Translated Omar. Terrible assault on British morality. Abhorred attempts to explain his Persian away and adapt him for the Salvation Army. "His worldly pleasures were what they profess to be without any pretence at divine Allegory: his Wine is the veritable juice of the Grape: his Tavern, where it was to be had."—Preface to the first edition.

TENNYSON. A port-bibber.

BROWNING. Knew the flavor of Italian wines.

TROLLOPE. Says in his "Autobiography": "If a cup of wine has been a joy to me . . . wine has brought me to no sorrow." Industry too amazing for credence if the interminable novels were not there to prove it.

SWINBURNE. Periodic souse. Got stewed in a club and jumped on the hats in the coat-room. Occasion of a parody of one of his lyrics, the

parody beginning: "What shall we do with all our hats?" Episode not recorded in Gosse's official biography. According to Gosse, Swinburne never gets drunk. He has "excesses in London" and goes to the country to recover. Amazingly prolific, industrious and studious for more than fifty years. Some of his prose, at its worst slovenly and verbose, may have been written when he was drunk. Possibly also some of the lines in which he seems to be writing parody of himself. Most of his lines, written under the influence of such liquor as the gods drink, unknown to mere mortal lips.

ROSSETTI. Preferred his alcohol mixed with chloral. A bad dose for poet or painter. *The* supreme master of the sonnet, excepting none, not even Shakespeare.

POE. Drank, but was not a drunkard. Died at forty leaving ten volumes which even in the least distinguished pages are notable for clear, precise workmanship. His exquisite manuscripts were not penned by a shaky hand. Biographies of him, both hostile and friendly, are a mess of miscomprehension.

HOLMES. Took good care of himself and lived to be eighty-five. His last book was very lively and delightful. Satirized prohibition in "Ode for a Social Meeting: With Slight Alterations by a Teetotaler."

LOWELL. Got stewed when he was elected class poet at Harvard and with a hangover stood up in Appleton Chapel and bowed to his classmates. For this crime he was rusticated by the college authorities. No record or rumor of later escapades with the Demon.

MARK TWAIN. A consistent old-fashioned Western whiskey drinker. Wonderfully steady head, eye, hand and legs. Describes a midnight dinner in Boston: "Osgood full, Boyle O'Reilly full, Fairchild responsively loaded, Aldrich and myself possessing the floor and properly fortified." Nice definitions of three alcoholic degrees!

HOWELLS. Sent Bartley Hubbard to the devil on about enough beer to make a cat sick. When Mark Twain called on him he had to remember to send down to the grocery store to get a bottle!

III

I have considered only a few artists in English letters, and leave it to more competent critics to study the lives of masters in the other arts and of continental writers from Q. Horatius Flaccus to Paul Verlaine.

Now for my complaint, as a mere reader. It used to be a great hap-

piness to sit in an easy chair or lie in bed and read and smoke, with a glass or a stein on the reading-table. If the drink and the book together put me to sleep, there could be no deeper bliss. If the drink had an enlivening effect and I imagined myself a keen critic, competent to give the author's ideas a pretty little twist all my own, the delusion was harmless and happy. But my real complaint is not simply that my reading-table, like my dining-table, is dry. My misery as a reader lies in this: literature is a vast conduit of alcohol and every book I begin to read for fun reminds me of good things to drink until my throat aches.

This is an honest record of the books I tried to read in one evening. I give you my word that, except for a little deliberate and confessed sciolism on the last page, I have not searched through my library for references to alcohol in order to get neat illustrations for this paper. If you will not take my word, the self-evident lack of relation between the books may carry conviction. That day I had read other books or parts of them as a professional chore. The books I shall speak of I took up in an idle way as recreation, with no duty toward them, free to drop them if they bored me. The first, was the second series of Galsworthy's plays. I had never read or had forgotten "The Eldest Son." I began it and was going merrily along through the dismal thing, when, near the beginning of the third act, I came to this stage direction: "A Footman enters with a tray of whiskey, gin, lemons, and soda water." Not only whiskey, not only gin, but both! I don't know how that distressed family got out of their troubles, and I don't want to know. I hope they all died of thirst.

My chum had been reading, and had left on the table a shabby book in an ugly green binding that I had not seen for years, an English translation of some tales by Erckmann-Chatrian, "Stories of the Rhine." I reached for it listlessly and began. Bacchus and Gambrinus! It was not water that ran in that river in the brave old days. It was Rheinwein. The people bathed in it. In the first story a young man sets out to seek his fortune. He doesn't know just which way to turn, so he goes into a tavern and orders a can of wine. Thus it is in the English—a "can" of wine. And then he orders another can of wine. He is not a dissolute fellow, but a sturdy, ambitious man. Later in his prosperous life he narrates his adventures to his former master "with some bottles of old Rudesheim before them." Not *a* bottle, but *some* bottles, to start with before he begins his narrative. I don't know what finally happened to him. I hope he was drowned in the Rhine.

I got through the next two yarns without strangling and then I received the supreme shock, so stunning that I could not move. I could not drop the story but read it to the bitter end, panting, fascinated. It is the tale of a drinking bout "the like of which has never been known in Holland within the memory of man." It may be cruel to make you suffer with me, but listen! "A cask of ale was placed on the table, and two pots containing a pint each were filled to the brim." The contestants "drank them off at once, and so on every half-hour with the regularity of a clock until the cask was empty. Then they passed on to porter, and after porter to lambic." I don't know what "lambic" is but it must be great stuff. The struggle with strong beer lasted three days and three nights and then they finished off with Schiedam, "the oldest and the strongest." The purpose of the contest was simply to decide the ownership of a painting. I detest that pair of collaborators, Erckmann and Chatrian, and I hope they died in a garret of a terrible fever.

I went to bed but I could not sleep. There had been something in the newspapers about Mitchell Kennerley's having found the manuscript of Oscar Wilde's "Portrait of Mr. W. H." It seems to be a longer version than that which appears in Wilde's collected works. I got up and found the volume of Wilde's prose in Nichols' Cosmopolitan Library, a neat little book easy to hold in bed. The "Portrait of Mr. W. H." is only moderately interesting. I read it through peacefully. Then I turned in the same volume to Wilde's one novel, or long tale, "The Picture of Dorian Gray." It isn't very gripping late at night if you know the plot and are familiar with the epigrams that Wilde used twice, in this story and in the plays—a thrifty poverty for so clever a man. But I was soon sailing along easily, charmed with the slightly stale beauty of the phrases. Alcohol, as you know, plays no part in this ingenious story. The excessive use of it would be a minor vice in the progressive degradation of Dorian. But I was not to be left in peace. In the third chapter I fell headfirst into this: "Philosophy herself became young, and catching the mad music of Pleasure, wearing, one might fancy, her wine-stained robe and wreath of ivy, danced like a Bacchante over the hills of life, and mocked the slow Silenus for being sober. Facts fled before her like frightened forest things. Her white feet trod the huge press at which wise Omar sits, till the seething grape-juice rose round her bare limbs in waves of purple bubbles, or crawled in red foam over the vat's black, dripping, sloping sides." Like Dante's lovers, in that book I read no farther.

IV

When I name the next book that I looked at that night I know the reader will accuse me of having selected it maliciously for the purpose of this discourse. I swear it is not so, and to back my oath I will give the circumstances that led to the selection. They are rather interesting in themselves, if the reader cares for this sort of half literary gossip. An editorial paragraph in the *Freeman* a few days before had spoken of the Bible as an indispensable source of sound English style. Oddly enough, that same week on the front page of the *Literary Review* of the New York *Evening Post* was an article on style and good English in which the writer pointed out that the style of the King James Bible, magnificent as it is for its own purposes, is not in all passages and in all respects a good working model for the kind of English we should like to write today. I fell to meditating on two things. First, it is queer that two writers, probably not in communication with each other and having no common piece of news to set them both going, should happen on the same subject in the same week. Then I considered in a half-sleepy way which of the two views was nearer right and whether they were really opposed. I thought of Matthew Arnold's saying that the kind of prose a modern man would be glad to write should begin with Dryden, that English prose before Dryden, however beautiful, is archaic and not for us to imitate. Here, I lazily thought, was a possible essay. So partly from professional motives I slid out of bed and got the Bible.

The Blessed Book reeks with alcohol from Genesis to Revelation. The connotations are sometimes joyous and sometimes sinful. The pious grape-juicers who invoke Divine Authority in support of their coercive measures seem to forget a part of the record which they accept as the true expression of the will of God. But be careful how you argue with them, and be sure to look attentively at the pages that you take out of their book to refute them withal. For the account of the first vineyard and the result of its fruits is a rather bad story. You will find it in the ninth chapter of Genesis. Father Noah got drunk, and his drunkenness led to the sin of his son, Ham, for which Ham and his descendants were cursed and condemned to be the servants of the rest of the human family. Noah seems to have been none the worse for his debauch and to have led an exemplary life thereafter, for he lived nine hundred and fifty years. Some of the ancient fathers acquit him of guilt on the ground that he was the first drinker and did not know

what the effect of the new-found beverage was to be. Others argue that before the deluge men were not ignorant of wine, which, as one commentator puts it, "is a liquor so generally useful and agreeable that it could scarcely be unknown to Adam himself." But the commentators are only secondary authorities; according to the Bible wine began its career with an unsavory episode.

It soon acquired dignity, however, and became a recognized form of wealth. Isaac sustained Jacob "with corn and wine;" the venison seems to have been furnished by Esau. Jacob's son, Judah, "washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes." This was a way of expressing the richness of his inheritance. As one of the temporal good things wine was a symbol of spiritual blessings. Isaiah, intending the freedom of salvation, says: "Come buy wine and milk without money." In other passages wine is used metaphorically for something undesirable, as in Jeremiah 25: 15, where the Lord says: "Take the wine cup of this fury at My hand." On the whole, the Biblical evidence as to the virtues and dangers of wine is contradictory and so is true to the experience of the race. In the parable of Jotham wine "cheereth God and man." On the other hand, according to Proverbs xx: "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise."

But I am not writing a commentary. Look up for yourself in a concordance all the references to "vine," "vineyard," and "wine." That is what I did just now, as a matter of professional interest. That night, you may be sure, I did not reach much beyond Genesis, but fell asleep finally in a state of arid exhaustion, from which I awoke with a more rebellious thirst than ever flourished of a morning after a real night before.

V

Some day I shall go to Paris or Florence or Munich and sit in a café next door to a book-stall and read and read and read and drink and drink and drink. But in a civilized country I shall be able to read in comfort, and, losing myself in books for many long hours, I shall think little about drink because it will be at hand. And that is the moral.

MISS THOMPSON

by *W. Somerset Maugham**

CHAPTER I

IT was nearly bed-time and when they awoke next morning land would be in sight.

Dr. Macphail lit his pipe and leaning over the rail, searched the heavens for the Southern Cross. After two years at the front and a wound that had taken longer to heal than it should, he was glad to settle down quietly at Apia for twelve months at least, and he felt already better for the journey.

Since some of the passengers were leaving the ship next day at Pago-Pago they had had a little dance that evening and in his ears hammered still the harsh notes of the mechanical piano. But the deck was quiet at last. A little way off he saw his wife in a long chair talking with the Davidsons, and he strolled over to her. When he sat down under the light and took off his hat you saw that he had very red hair, with a bald patch on the crown, and the red, freckled skin which accompanies red hair; he was a man of forty, thin, with a pinched face, precise and rather pedantic and he spoke with a Scotch accent in a very low, quiet voice.

Between the Macphails and the Davidsons, who were missionaries, there had arisen the intimacy of shipboard, which is due to propinquity rather than to any community of taste. Their chief tie was the disapproval they shared of the men who spent their days and nights in the smoking-room playing poker or bridge and drinking. Mrs. Macphail was not a little flattered to think that she and her husband were the only people on board with whom the Davidsons were willing to associate, and even the doctor, shy but no fool, half unconsciously acknowledged the compliment. It was only because he was of an argumentative mind that in their cabin at night he permitted himself to carp.

"Mrs. Davidson was saying she didn't know how they'd have got through the journey if it hadn't been for us," said Mrs. Macphail as she neatly brushed out her transformation. "She said we were really the only people on the ship they cared to know."

* This is the short story from which the play, *Rain*, was made. The history of its acceptance is told in the Introduction. In the preface to *East and West* Mr. Maugham tells how he came to write the story.

"I shouldn't have thought a missionary was such a big bug that he could afford to put on frills."

"It's not frills. I quite understand what she means. It wouldn't have been very nice for the Davidsons to have to mix with all that rough lot in the smoking-room."

"The founder of their religion wasn't so exclusive," said Dr. Macphail with a chuckle.

"I've asked you over and over again not to joke about religion," answered his wife. "I shouldn't like to have a nature like yours, Alec. You never look for the best in people."

He gave her a sidelong glance with his pale, blue eyes, but did not reply. After many years of married life he had learned that it was more conducive to peace to leave his wife with the last word. He was undressed before her, and climbing into the upper bunk he settled down to read himself to sleep.

When he got on deck next morning they were close to the land. They ran along the island, and through his glasses he looked at it with greedy eyes. There was a thin strip of silver beach rising quickly to hills covered to the top with luxuriant vegetation. The cocoanut trees, thick and green, came nearly to the water's edge, and among them you saw the grass houses of the Samoans and here and there, gleaming white, a little church.

Mrs. Davidson came and stood beside him. She was dressed in black and wore round her neck a gold chain, from which dangled a small cross. She was a little woman, with brown, dull hair very elaborately arranged, and she had prominent blue eyes behind gold-rimmed *pince-nez*. Her face was long, like a sheep's, but she gave no impression of foolishness, rather of extreme alertness; she had the quick movements of a bird. The most remarkable thing about her was her voice, high, metallic, and without inflection; it fell on the ear with a hard monotony, irritating to the nerves like the pitiless clamour of a pneumatic drill.

"This must seem like home to you," said Dr. Macphail, with his thin, difficult smile.

"Ours are low islands, you know, not like these. Coral. These are volcanic. We've got another ten days' journey to reach them."

"In these parts that's almost like being in the next street at home," said Dr. Macphail facetiously.

"Well, that's rather an exaggerated way of putting it, but one

does look at distances differently in the South Seas. So far you're right."

Dr. Macphail sighed faintly.

"I'm glad we're not stationed here," she went on. "They say this is a terribly difficult place to work in. The steamers touching make the people unsettled and then there's the naval station; that's bad for the natives. In our district we don't have difficulties like that to contend with. There are one or two traders, of course, but we take care to make them behave, and if they don't we make the place so hot for them they're glad to go."

Fixing the glasses on her nose she looked at the green island with a ruthless stare.

"It's almost a hopeless task for the missionaries here. I can never be sufficiently thankful to God that we are at least spared that."

Davidson's district consisted of a group of islands to the North of Samoa; they were widely separated and he had frequently to go long distances by canoe. At these times his wife remained at their headquarters and managed the mission. Dr. Macphail felt his heart sink when he considered the efficiency with which she certainly managed it. She spoke of the depravity of the natives in a voice which nothing could hush, but with a vehemently unctuous horror. Her sense of delicacy was singular. Early in their acquaintance she had said to him:

"You know, their marriage customs when we first settled in the islands were so shocking that I couldn't possibly describe them to you. But I'll tell Mrs. Macphail and she'll tell you."

Then he had seen his wife and Mrs. Davidson, their deck chairs close together, in earnest conversation for about two hours. As he walked past them backwards and forwards for the sake of exercise he heard Mrs. Davidson's agitated whisper, like the distant flow of a mountain torrent, and he saw by his wife's open mouth and pale face that she was enjoying an alarming experience. At night in their cabin she repeated to him with bated breath all she had heard.

"Well, what did I say to you?" cried Mrs. Davidson, exultant next morning. "Did you ever hear anything more dreadful? You don't wonder that I couldn't tell you myself, do you? Even though you are a doctor."

Mrs. Davidson scanned his face. She had a dramatic eagerness to see that she had achieved the desired effect.

"Can you wonder that when we first went there our hearts sank?

You'll hardly believe me when I tell you it was impossible to find a single good girl in any of the villages."

She used the word *good* in a severely technical manner.

"Mr. Davidson and I talked it over, and we made up our minds the first thing to do was to put down the dancing. The natives were crazy about dancing."

"I was not averse to it myself when I was a young man," said Dr. Macphail.

"I guessed as much when I heard you ask Mrs. Macphail to have a turn with you last night. I don't think there's any real harm if a man dances with his wife, but I was relieved that she wouldn't. Under the circumstances I thought it better that we should keep ourselves to ourselves."

"Under what circumstances?"

Mrs. Davidson gave him a quick look through her *pince-nez*, but did not answer his question.

"But among white people it's not quite the same," she went on, "though I must say I agree with Mr. Davidson, who says he can't understand how a husband can stand by and see his wife in another man's arms, and as far as I'm concerned I've never danced a step since I married. But the native dancing is quite another matter. It's not only immoral in itself, but it distinctly leads to immorality. However, I'm thankful to God that we stamped it out, and I don't think I'm wrong in saying that no one has danced in our district for eight years."

CHAPTER II

But now they came to the mouth of the harbour and Mrs. Macphail joined them. The ship turned sharply and steamed slowly in. It was a great landlocked harbour big enough to hold a fleet of battleships and all around it rose, high and steep, the green hills. Near the entrance, getting such breeze as blew from the sea, stood the governor's house in a garden. The Stars and Stripes dangled languidly from a flagstaff. They passed two or three trim bungalows, and a tennis court, and then they came to the quay with its warehouses.

Mrs. Davidson pointed out the schooner, moored two or three hundred yards from the side, which was to take them to Apia. There was a crowd of eager, noisy, and good-humoured natives come from all parts of the island, some from curiosity, others to barter with the travellers on their way to Sydney; and they brought pineapples and

huge bunches of bananas, *tapa* cloths, necklaces of shells or shark's teeth, *kava* bowls, and models of war canoes. American sailors, neat and trim, clean-shaven and frank of face, sauntered among them, and there was a little group of officials.

While their luggage was being landed the Macphails and Mrs. Davidson watched the crowd. Dr. Macphail looked at the yaws from which most of the children and the young boys seemed to suffer, disfiguring acres like torpid ulcers, and his professional eyes glistened when he saw for the first time in his experience cases of elephantiasis, men going about with a huge, heavy arm or dragging along a grossly disfigured leg. Men and women wore the *lava-lava*.

"It's a very indecent costume," said Mrs. Davidson.

"Mr. Davidson thinks it should be prohibited by law. How can you expect people to be moral when they wear nothing but a strip of red cotton round their loins?"

"It's suitable enough to the climate," said the doctor, wiping the sweat off his head.

Now that they were on land the heat though it was so early in the morning, was already oppressive. Closed in by its hills, not a breath of air came in to Pago-Pago.

"In our lands," Mrs. Davidson went on in her high-pitched tones, "we've practically eradicated the *lava-lava*. A few old men still continue to wear it, but that's all. The women have all taken to the Mother Hubbard, and the men wear trousers and singlets. At the very beginning of our stay Mr. Davidson said in one of his reports: 'The inhabitants of these islands will never be thoroughly christianized till every boy of more than ten years is made to wear a pair of trousers.' "

But Mrs. Davidson had given two or three of her birdlike glances at heavy gray clouds that came floating over the mouth of the harbour. A few drops began to fall.

"We'd better take shelter," she said.

They made their way with all the crowd to a great shed of corrugated iron, and the rain began to fall in torrents. They stood there for some time and then were joined by Mr. Davidson. He had been polite enough to the Macphails during the journey, but he had not his wife's sociability, and had spent most of his time reading. He was a silent, rather sullen man, and you felt that his affability was a duty that he imposed upon himself christianly; he was by nature reserved and even morose.

His appearance was singular. He was very tall and thin, with long

limbs loosely jointed; hollow cheeks and curiously high cheek-bones; he had so cadaverous an air that it surprised you to notice how full and sensual were his lips. He wore his hair very long. His dark eyes, set deep in their sockets, were large and tragic; and his hands with their big, long fingers, were finely shaped; they gave him a look of great strength. But the most striking thing about him was the feeling he gave you of suppressed fire. It was impressive and vaguely troubling. He was not a man with whom any intimacy was possible.

He brought now unwelcome news. There was an epidemic of measles, a serious and often fatal disease among the Kanakas, on the island, and a case had developed among the crew of the schooner which was to take them on their journey. The sick man had been brought ashore and put in hospital on the quarantine station, but telegraphic instructions had been sent from Apia to say that the schooner would not be allowed to enter the harbour till it was certain no other member of the crew was affected.

"It means we shall have to stay here for ten days at least."

"But I'm urgently needed at Apia," said Dr. Macphail.

"That can't be helped. If no more cases develop on board, the schooner will be allowed to sail with white passengers, but all native traffic is prohibited for three months."

"Is there a hotel here?" asked Mrs. Macphail.

Davidson gave a low chuckle.

"There's not."

"What shall we do then?"

"I've been talking to the Governor. There's a trader along the front who has rooms that he lets, and my proposition is that as soon as the rain lets up we should go along there and see what we can do. Don't expect comfort. You've just got to be thankful if we get a bed to sleep on and a roof over our heads."

But the rain showed no signs of stopping, and at length with umbrellas and waterproofs they set out. There was no town, but merely a group of official buildings, a store or two, and at the back, among the cocoanut trees and plantains, a few native dwellings. The house they sought was about five minutes' walk from the wharf. It was a frame house of two stories, with broad verandahs on both floors and a roof of corrugated iron.

The owner was a half-caste named Horn, with a native wife surrounded by little brown children, and on the ground floor he had a

store where he sold canned goods and cottons. The rooms he showed them were almost bare of furniture. In the Macphails' there was nothing but a poor, worn bed with a ragged mosquito net, a rickety chair and a washstand. They looked around with dismay. The rain poured down without ceasing.

"I'm not going to unpack more than we actually need," said Mrs. Macphail.

Mrs. Davidson came into the room as she was unlocking a portmanteau. She was very brisk and alert. The cheerless surroundings had no effect on her.

"If you'll take my advice you'll get a needle and cotton and start right in to mend the mosquito net," she said, "or you'll not be able to get a wink of sleep to-night."

"Will they be very bad?" asked Dr. Macphail.

"This is the season for them. When you're asked to a party at Government House at Apia you'll notice that all the ladies are given a pillow slip to put their—their lower extremities in."

"I wish the rain would stop for a moment," said Mrs. Macphail. "I could try to make the place comfortable with more heart if the sun were shining."

"Oh, if you wait for that, you'll wait a long time. Pago-Pago is about the rainiest place in the Pacific. You see, the hills, and that bay, they attract the water, and one expects rain at this time of year anyway."

She looked from Macphail to his wife, standing helplessly in different parts of the room, like lost souls, and she pursed her lips. She saw that she must take them in hand. Feckless people like that made her impatient, but her hands itched to put everything in the order which came so naturally to her.

"Here, you give me a needle and cotton and I'll mend that net of yours, while you go on with your unpacking. Dinner's at one. Dr. Macphail, you'd better go down to the wharf and see that your heavy luggage has been put in a dry place. You know what these natives are. They're quite capable of storing it where the rain will beat in on it all the time."

Macphail put on his waterproof again and went downstairs. At the door the trader was standing in conversation with the quartermaster of the ship he had just arrived in and a second class passenger whom he had seen several times on board. The quartermaster, a little, shrivelled man, extremely dirty, nodded to him as he passed.

"This is a bad job about the measles, Doc," he said. "I see you've fixed yourself up already."

Dr. Macphail thought he was rather familiar, but he was a timid man and he did not take offense easily.

"Yes, we've got a room upstairs."

"Miss Thompson was sailing with you to Apia, so I've brought her along here."

The quartermaster pointed with his thumb to the woman standing by his side. She was twenty-seven perhaps, plump, and in a coarse fashion pretty. She wore a white dress and a large white hat. Her fat calves in white cotton stockings bulged over the tops of long white boots in glaze kid. She gave Macphail an ingratiating smile.

"The feller's tryin' to soak me a dollar and a half a day for the meanest sized room," she said in a hoarse voice.

"I tell you she's a friend of mine, Jo," said the quartermaster. "She can't pay more than a dollar, and you've sure got to take her for that."

The trader was fat and smooth and quietly smiling.

"Well, if you put it like that, Mr. Swan, I'll see what I can do about it. I'll talk to Mrs. Horn and if we think we can made a reduction we will."

"Don't try to pull that stuff with me," said Miss Thompson. "We'll settle this right now. You get a dollar a day for the room and not one bean more."

Dr. Macphail smiled. He admired the effrontery with which she bargained. He was the sort of man who always paid what he was asked. He preferred to be overcharged than to haggle. The trader sighed.

"Well, to oblige Mr. Swan I'll take it."

"That's the goods," said Miss Thompson. "Come right in and have a shot of hooch. I've got some real good rye in that grip if you'll bring it along, Mr. Swan. You come along too, doctor."

"Oh, I don't think I will, thank you," he answered. "I'm just going down to see that our luggage is all right."

He stepped out into the rain. It swept in from the opening of the harbour in sheets and the opposite shore was all blurred. He passed two or three natives clad in nothing but the *lava-lava*, with huge umbrellas over them. They walked finely, with leisurely movements, very upright; and they smiled and greeted him in a strange tongue as they went by.

It was nearly dinner time when he got back, and their meal was laid in the trader's parlour. It was a room designed not to live in but for purposes of prestige, and it had a musty, melancholy air. A suite of stamped velvet was arranged neatly round the walls, and from the middle of the ceiling, protected from the flies by yellow tissue paper, hung a gilt chandelier. Davidson did not come.

"I know he went to call on the Governor," said Mrs. Davidson, "and I guess he's kept him to dinner."

A little native girl brought them a dish of Hamburger steak, and after a while the trader came up to see that they had everything they wanted.

"I see we have a bellow lodger, Mr. Horn," said Dr. Macphail.

"She's taken a room, that's all," answered the trader. "She's getting her own board."

He looked at the two ladies with an obsequious air.

"I put her downstairs so that she shouldn't be in the way. She won't be any trouble to you."

"Is it someone who was on the boat?" asked Mrs. Macphail.

Yes, ma'am, she was in the second cabin. She was going to Apia. She has a position as cashier waiting for her."

"Oh!"

When the trader was gone Macphail said:

"I shouldn't think she'd find it exactly cheerful having her meals in her room."

"If she was in the second cabin I expect she'd rather," answered Mrs. Davidson. "I don't exactly know who it can be."

"I happened to be there when the quartermaster brought her along. Her name's Thompson."

"It's not the woman who was dancing with the quartermaster last night?" asked Mrs. Davidson.

"That's who it must be," said Mrs. Macphail. "I wondered at the time what she was. She looked rather fast to me."

"Not good style at all," said Mrs. Davidson.

CHAPTER III

They began to talk of other things, and after dinner, tired with their early rise, they separated and slept. When they awoke, though the sky was still gray and the clouds hung low, it was not raining and they went for a walk on the high road which the Americans had built along the bay.

On their return they found that Davidson had just come in.

"We may be here for a fortnight," he said irritably. "I've argued it out with the Governor, but he says there is nothing to be done."

"Mr. Davidson's just longing to get back to his work," said his wife with an anxious glance at him.

"We've been away for a year," he said, walking up and down the verandah. "The mission has been in charge of native missionaries and I'm terribly nervous that they've let things slide. They're good men, I'm not saying a word against them, God-fearing, devout and truly Christian men—their Christianity would put many so-called Christians at home to the blush—but they're pitifully lacking in energy. They can make a stand once, they can make a stand twice, but they can't make a stand all the time. If you leave a mission in charge of a native missionary, no matter how trustworthy he seems, in the course of time you'll find he's let abuses creep in."

Mr. Davidson stood still. With his tall, spare form, and his great eyes flashing out of his pale face, he was an impressive figure. His sincerity was obvious in the fire of his gestures and in his deep, ringing voice.

"I expect to have my work cut out for me. I shall act and I shall act promptly. If the tree is rotten it shall be cut down and cast into the flames."

And in the evening after the high tea which was their last meal, while they sat in the stiff parlour, the ladies working and Dr. Macphail smoking his pipe, the missionary told them of his work in the islands.

"When we went there they had no sense of sin at all," he said. "They broke the commandments one after the other and never knew they were doing wrong. And I think that was the most difficult part of my work to instil into the natives the sense of sin."

The Macphails knew already that Davidson had worked in the Solomons for five years before he met his wife. She had been a missionary in China, and they had become acquainted in Boston, where they were both spending part of their leave to attend a missionary congress. On their marriage they had been appointed to the islands in which they had laboured ever since.

In the course of all the conversations they had had with Mr. Davidson one thing had shone out clearly and that was the man's unflinching courage. He was a medical missionary, and he was liable to be called at any time to one or other of the islands in the group. Even the whale

boat is not so very safe a conveyance in the stormy Pacific of the wet season, but often he would be sent for in a canoe and then the danger was great. In cases of illness or accident he never hesitated. A dozen times he had spent the whole night baling for his life, and more than once Mrs. Davidson had given him up for lost.

"I'd beg him not to go sometimes," she said, "or at least to wait till the weather was more settled, but he'd never listen. He's obstinate, and when he's once made up his mind, nothing can move him."

"How can I ask the natives to put their trust in the Lord if I am afraid to do so myself?" cried Davidson, "And I'm not, I'm not. They know that if they send for me in their trouble, I'll come if it's humanly possible. And do you think the Lord is going to abandon me when I am on His business? The wind blows at His bidding and the waves toss and rage at His word"

Dr. Macphail was a timid man. He had never been able to get used to the hurtling of the shells over the trenches, and when he was operating in an advanced dressing station the sweat poured from his brow and dimmed his spectacles in the effort he made to control his unsteady hand. He shuddered a little as he looked at the missionary.

"I wish I could say that I've never been afraid," he said.

"I wish you could say that you believed in God," retorted the other.

But for some reason, that evening, the missionary's thoughts travelled back to the early days he and his wife had spent on the islands.

"Sometimes Mrs. Davidson and I would look at one another and the tears stream down our cheeks. We worked without ceasing, day and night, and we seemed to make no progress. I don't know what I should have done without her then. When I felt my heart sink, when I was very near despair, she gave me courage and hope."

Mrs. Davidson looked down at her work, and a slight colour rose to her thin cheeks. Her hands trembled a little. She did not trust herself to speak.

"We had no one to help us. We were alone, thousands of miles from any of our own people, surrounded by darkness. When I was broken and weary she would put her work aside and take the Bible and read to me till peace came and settled upon me like sleep upon the eyelids of a child, and when at last she closed the book she'd say: 'We'll save them in spite of themselves.' And I felt strong again in the Lord and I answered, 'Yes, with God's help I'll save them. I *must* save them'."

He came over to the table and stood in front of it as though it were a lectern.

"You see, they were so naturally depraved that they couldn't be brought to see their wickedness. We had to make sins out of what they thought were natural actions. We had to make it a sin, not only to commit adultery and to lie and steal, but to expose their bodies, and to dance and not to come to church. I made it a sin for a girl to show her bosom and a sin for a man not to wear trousers."

"How?" asked Dr. Macphail, not without surprise.

"I instituted fines. Obviously the only way to make people realize that an action is sinful is to punish them if they commit it. I fined them if they didn't come to church, and I fined them if they danced. I fined them if they were improperly dressed. I had a tariff, and every sin had to be paid for either in money or work. And at last I made them understand."

"But did they never refuse to pay?"

"How could they?" asked the missionary.

"It would be a brave man who tried to stand up against Mr. Davidson," said his wife, tightening her lips.

Dr. Macphail looked at Davidson with troubled eyes. What he heard shocked him, but he hesitated to express his disapproval.

"You must remember that in the last resort I could expel them from their church membership."

"Did they mind that?"

Davidson smiled a little and gently rubbed his hands.

"They couldn't sell their copra. When the men fished they got no share of the catch. It meant something very like starvation. Yes, they minded quite a lot."

"Tell him about Fred Ohlson," said Mrs. Davidson.

The missionary fixed his fiery eyes on Dr. Macphail.

"Fred Ohlson was a Danish trader who had been in the islands a good many years. He was a pretty rich man as traders go and he wasn't very pleased when we came. You see, he'd had things very much his own way. He paid the natives what he liked for their copra, and he paid in goods and whisky. He had a native wife, but he was flagrantly unfaithful to her. He was a drunkard. I gave him a chance to mend his ways, but he wouldn't take it. He laughed at me."

Davidson's voice fell to a deep bass as he said the last words, and he was silent for a minute or two. The silence was heavy with menace.

"In two years he was a ruined man. He'd lost everything he'd saved in a quarter of a century. I broke him, and at last he was forced to come

to me like a beggar and beseech me to give him a passage back to Sydney."

"I wish you could have seen him when he came to see Mr. Davidson," said the missionary's wife. "He had been a fine powerful man, with a lot of fat on him, and he had a great big voice, but now he was half the size, and he was shaking all over. He'd suddenly become an old man."

With abstracted gaze Davidson looked out into the night. The rain was falling again.

Suddenly from below came a sound, and Davidson turned and looked questioningly at his wife. It was the sound of a gramophone, harsh and loud, wheezing out a syncopated tune.

"What's that?" he asked.

Mrs. Davidson fixed her *pince-nez* more firmly on her nose.

"One of the second-class passengers has a room in the house. I guess it comes from there."

They listened in silence, and presently they heard the sound of dancing. Then the music stopped, and they heard the popping of corks and voices raised in animated conversation.

"I dare say she's giving a farewell party to her friends on board," said Dr. Macphail. "The ship sails at twelve, doesn't it?"

Davidson made no remark, but he looked at his watch.

"Are you ready?" he asked his wife.

She got up and folded her work.

"Yes, I guess I am," she answered.

"It's early to go to bed yet, isn't it?" said the doctor.

"We have a good deal of reading to do," explained Mrs. Davidson. "Wherever we are, we read a chapter of the Bible before retiring for the night and we study it with the commentaries, you know, and discuss it thoroughly. It's a wonderful training for the mind."

The two couples bade one another good night. Dr. and Mrs. Macphail were left alone. For two or three minutes they did not speak. "I think I'll go and fetch the cards," the doctor said at last.

Mrs. Macphail looked at him doubtfully. Her conversation with the Davidsons had left her a little uneasy, but she did not like to say that she thought they had better not play cards when the Davidsons might come in at any moment. Dr. Macphail brought them and she watched him though with a vague sense of guilt, while he laid out his patience. Below the sound of revelry continued.

CHAPTER IV

It was fine enough next day, and the Macphails condemned to spend a fortnight of idleness at Pago-Pago, set about making the best of things.

They went down to the quay and got out of their boxes a number of books. The doctor called on the chief surgeon of the naval hospital and went round the beds with him. They left cards on the Governor. They passed Miss Thompson on the road. The doctor took off his hat, and she gave him a "Good morning, Doc!" in a loud, cheerful voice. She was dressed as on the previous day in a white frock, and her shiny white boots with their high heels, her fat legs bulging over the tops of them, were strange things in that primitive landscape.

"I don't think she's very suitably dressed, I must say," said Mrs. Macphail. "She looks extremely common to me."

When they got back to their house she was on the verandah playing with one of the trader's dark children.

"Say a word to her," Dr. Macphail whispered to his wife. "She's all alone here, and it seems rather unkind to ignore her."

Mrs. Macphail was shy, but she was in the habit of doing what her husband bade her.

"I think we're fellow lodgers here," she said, rather foolishly.

"Terrible, ain't it? Bein' cooped up in a one-horse place like this," answered Miss Thompson. "And they tell me I'm lucky to have gotten a room. I don't see myself livin' in a native house, and that's what some have to do. I don't know why they don't have a hotel."

They exchanged a few more words. Miss Thompson, loud-voiced and garrulous, was evidently quite willing to gossip, but Mrs. Macphail had a poor stock of small talk and presently she said:

"Well, I think we must go upstairs."

In the evening, when they sat down to their high tea, Davidson on coming in said:

"I see that woman downstairs has a couple of sailors sitting there. I wonder how she's gotten acquainted with them."

"She can't be very particular," said Mrs. Davidson.

They were all rather tired after the idle, aimless day.

"If there's going to be a fortnight of this I don't know what we shall feel like at the end of it," said Dr. Macphail.

"The only thing to do is to portion out the day to different activities," answered the missionary. "I shall set aside a certain number of

hours to study and a certain number to exercise, rain or fine—in the wet season you can't afford to pay any attention to the rain—and a certain number to recreation."

Dr. Macphail looked at his companion with misgiving. Davidson's programme oppressed him. They were eating Hamburger steak again. It seemed the only dish the cook knew how to make. Then below the gramophone began. Davidson started nervously when he heard it, but said nothing. Men's voices floated up. Miss Thompson's guests were joining in a well-known song and presently they heard her voice too, hoarse and loud. There was a good deal of shouting and laughing. The four people upstairs, trying to make conversation, listened despite themselves to the clink of glasses and the scrape of chairs. More people had evidently come. Miss Thompson was giving a party.

"I wonder how she gets them all in," said Mrs. Macphail, suddenly breaking into a medical conversation between the missionary and her husband.

It showed whither her thoughts were wandering. The twitch of Davidson's face proved that, though he spoke of scientific things, his mind was busy in the same direction. Suddenly, while the doctor was giving some experience of practice on the Flanders front, rather prosily, he sprang to his feet with a cry.

"What's the matter, Alfred?" asked Mrs. Davidson.

"Of course! It never occurred to me. She's out of Iwelei."

"She can't be."

"She came on board at Honolulu. It's obvious. And she's carrying on her trade here. Here!"

He uttered the last word with a passion of indignation.

"What's Iwelei?" asked Mrs. Macphail.

He turned his gloomy eyes on her and his voice trembled with horror.

"The plague spot of Honolulu. The Red Light district. It was a blot on our civilization."

Iwelei was on the edge of the city. You went down side streets by the harbour, in the darkness, across a rickety bridge till you came to a deserted road, all ruts and holes, and then suddenly you came out into the light. There was parking room for motors on each side of the road, and there were saloons, tawdry and bright, each one noisy with its mechanical piano, and there were barber-shops and tobacconists. There was a stir in the air and a sense of expectant gaiety.

You turned down a narrow alley, either to the right or to the left,

for the road divided Iwelei into two parts, and you found yourself in the district. There were rows of little bungalows, trim and neatly painted in green, and the pathway between them was broad and straight. It was laid out like a garden city. In its respectable regularity, its order and spruceness, it gave an impression of sardonic horror; for never can the search for love have been so systematized and ordered. The pathways were lit by a rare lamp, but they would have been dark except for the lights that came from the open windows of the bungalows.

Men wandered about, looking at the women who sat at their windows, reading or sewing, for the most part taking no notice of the passers-by; and like the women they were of all nationalities. There were Americans, sailors from the ships in port, enlisted men off the gunboats, sombrely drunk, and soldiers from the regiments, white and black, quartered on the island; there were Japanese, walking in twos and threes; Hawaiians, Chinese in long robes, and Filipinos in preposterous hats. They were silent and as it were oppressed. Desire is sad.

"It was the most crying scandal of the Pacific," exclaimed Davidson vehemently. "The missionaries had been agitating against it for years, and at last the local press took it up. The police refused to stir. You know their argument. They say that vice is inevitable and consequently the best thing is to localize and control it. The truth is, they were paid. Paid. They were paid by the saloon-keepers, paid by the bullies, paid by the women themselves. At last they were forced to move."

"I read about it in the papers that came on board in Honolulu," said Dr. Macphail.

"Iwelei, with its sin and shame, ceased to exist on the very day we arrived. The whole population was brought before the justices. I don't know why I didn't understand at once what that woman was."

"Now you come to speak of it," said Mrs. Macphail, "I remember seeing her come on board only a few minutes before the boat sailed. I remember thinking at the time she was cutting it rather fine."

"How dare she come here!" cried Davidson indignantly. "I'm not going to allow it."

He strode towards the door.

"What are you going to do?" asked Macphail.

"What do you expect me to do? I'm going to stop it. I'm not going to have this house turned into—into . . ." He sought for a word that

should not offend the ladies' ears. His eyes were flashing and his pale face was paler still in his emotion.

"It sounds as though there were three or four men down there," said the doctor. "Don't you think it's rather rash to go in just now?"

The missionary gave him a contemptuous look and without a word flung out of the room.

"You know Mr. Davidson very little if you think the fear of personal danger can stop him in the performance of his duty," said his wife.

She sat with her hands nervously clasped, a spot of colour on her high cheek bones, listening to what was about to happen below. They all listened.

They heard him clatter down the wooden stairs and throw open the door. The singing stopped suddenly, but the gramophone continued to bray out its vulgar tune. They heard Davidson's voice and then the noise of something heavy falling. The music stopped. He had hurled the gramophone on the floor. Then again they heard Davidson's voice, they could not make out the words, then Miss Thompson's, loud and shrill, then a confused clamour as though several people were shouting together at the top of their lungs.

Mrs. Davidson gave a little gasp, and she clenched her hands more tightly. Dr. Macphail looked uncertainly from her to his wife. He did not want to go down, but he wondered if they expected him to. Then there was something that sounded like a scuffle. The noise now was more distinct. It might be that Davidson was being thrown out of the room. The door was slammed. There was a moment's silence and they heard Davidson come up the stairs again. He went to his room.

"I think I'll go to him," said Mrs. Davidson.

She got up and went out.

"If you want me, just call," said Mrs. Macphail, and then when the other was gone. "I hope he isn't hurt."

"Why couldn't he mind his own business?" said Dr. Macphail.

They sat in silence for a minute or two and then they both started, for the gramophone began to play once more, defiantly, and mocking voices shouted hoarsely the words of an obscene song.

CHAPTER V

Next day Mrs. Davidson was pale and tired. She complained of headache, and she looked old and wizened. She told Mrs. Macphail that the missionary had not slept at all. He had passed the night in a

state of frightful agitation and at five had got up and gone out. A glass of beer had been thrown over him and his clothes were stained and stinking. But a sombre fire glowed in Mrs. Davidson's eyes when she spoke of Miss Thompson.

"She'll bitterly rue the day when she flouted Mr. Davidson," she said. "Mr. Davidson has a wonderful heart and no one who is in trouble has ever gone to him without being comforted, but he has no mercy for sin, and when his righteous wrath is excited he's terrible."

"Why, what will he do?" asked Mrs. Macphail.

"I don't know, but I wouldn't stand in that creature's shoes for anything in the world."

Mrs. Macphail shuddered. There was something positively alarming in the triumphant assurance of the little woman's manner. They were going out together that morning, and they went down the stairs side by side. Miss Thompson's door was open, and they saw her in a bed-ragged dressing-gown, cooking something in a chafing-dish.

"Good morning," she called. "Is Mr. Davidson better this morning?"

They passed her in silence, with their noses in the air, as if she did not exist. They flushed, however, when she burst into a shout of derisive laughter. Mrs. Davidson turned on her suddenly.

"Don't you dare to speak to me," she screamed. "If you insult me I shall have you turned out of here."

"Say, did I ask Mr. Davidson to call on me?"

"Don't answer her," whispered Mrs. Macphail hurriedly.

They walked on till they were out of earshot.

"She's brazen, brazen!" burst from Mrs. Davidson.

Her anger almost suffocated her.

And on their way home they met her strolling toward the quay. She had all her finery on. Her great white hat with its vulgar, showy flowers was an affront. She called out cheerily to them as she went by, and a couple of American sailors who were standing there grinned as the ladies set their faces to an icy stare. They got in just before the rain began to fall again.

"I guess she'll get her fine clothes spoilt," said Mrs. Davidson with a bitter sneer.

Davidson did not come in till they were half way through dinner. He was wet through, but he would not change. He sat, morose and silent, refusing to eat more than a mouthful, and he stared at the

slanting rain. When Mrs. Davidson told him of their two encounters with Miss Thompson he did not answer. His deepening frown alone showed that he had heard.

"Don't you think we ought to make Mr. Horn turn her out of here?" asked Mrs. Davidson. "We can't allow her to insult us."

"There doesn't seem to be any other place for her to go," said Macphail.

"She can live with one of the natives."

"In weather like this a native hut must be a rather uncomfortable place to live in."

"I lived in one for years," said the missionary.

When the little native girl brought in the fried bananas which formed the sweet they had every day, Davidson turned to her.

"Ask Miss Thompson when it would be convenient for me to see her," he said.

The girl nodded shyly and went out.

"What do you want to see her for, Alfred?" asked his wife.

"It's my duty to see her. I won't act till I've given her every chance."

"You don't know what she is. She'll insult you."

"Let her insult me. Let her spit on me. She has an immortal soul, and I must do all that is in my power to save it."

Mrs. Davidson's ears rang still with the harlot's mocking laughter.

"She's gone too far."

"Too far for the mercy of God?" His eyes lit up suddenly and his voice grew mellow and soft. "Never. The sinner may be deeper in sin than the depth of hell itself, but the love of the Lord Jesus can reach him still."

The girl came back with the message.

"Miss Thompson's compliments and as long as Rev. Davidson don't come in business hours she'll be glad to see him at any time."

The party received the message in stony silence, and Dr. Macphail quickly effaced from his lips the smile which had come upon them. He knew his wife would be vexed with him if he found Miss Thompson's effrontery amusing.

They finished the meal in silence. When it was over the two ladies got up and took their work—Mrs. Macphail was making another of the innumerable comforters which she had turned out since the beginning of the war, and the doctor lit his pipe. But Davidson remained in his chair and with abstracted eyes stared at the table.

At last he got up and without a word went out of the room. They heard him go down and they heard Miss Thompson's defiant "come in" when he knocked at the door. He remained with her for an hour. And Dr. Macphail watched the rain. It was beginning to get on his nerves. It was not like the soft English rain that drops gently on the earth, it was unmerciful and somehow terrible; you felt in it the malignancy of the primitive powers of nature. It did not pour, it flowed. It was like a deluge from heaven, and it rattled on the roof of corrugated iron with a steady persistence that was maddening. It seemed to have a fury of its own. And sometimes you felt that you must scream if it did not stop, and then suddenly you felt powerless, as though your bones had suddenly become soft, and you were miserable and hopeless.

Macphail turned his head when the missionary came back. The two women looked up.

"I've given her every chance. I have exhorted her to repent. She is an evil woman."

He paused, and Dr. Macphail saw his eyes darken and his pale face grow hard and stern.

"Now I shall take the whips with which the Lord Jesus drove the usurers and the money changers out of the temple of the Most High."

He walked up and down the room. His mouth was close set, and his black brows were frowning.

"If she fled to the uttermost parts of the earth I should pursue her."

With a sudden movement he turned round and strode out of the room. They heard him go downstairs again.

"What is he going to do?" asked Mrs. Macphail.

"I don't know." Mrs. Davidson took off her *pince-nez* and wiped them. "When he is on the Lord's work I never ask him questions."

She sighed a little.

"What is the matter?"

"He'll wear himself out. He doesn't know what it is to spare himself."

Dr. Macphail learnt the first results of the missionary's activity from the half-caste trader in whose house they lodged. He stopped the doctor when he passed the store and came out to speak to him on the stoop. His fat face was worried.

"The Rev. Davidson has been at me for letting Miss Thompson have a room here," he said, "but I didn't know what she was when I rented it to her. When people come and ask if I can rent them a room all

I want to know is if they've the money to pay for it. And she paid me for hers a week in advance."

Dr. Macphail did not want to commit himself.

"When all's said and done it's your house. We're very much obliged to you for taking us in at all."

Horn looked at him doubtfully. He was not certain yet how definitely Macphail stood on the missionary's side.

"The missionaries are in with one another," he said hesitatingly.

"If they get down on a trader he may just as well shut up his store and quit."

"Did he want you to turn her out?"

"No, he said so long as she behaved herself he couldn't ask me to do that. He said he wanted to be just to me. I promised she wouldn't have no more visitors. I've just been and told her."

"How did she take it?"

"She gave me Hell."

The trader squirmed in his old ducks. He had found Miss Thompson a rough customer.

"Oh, well, I daresay she'll get out. I don't suppose she wants to stay here if she can't have anyone in."

"There's nowhere she can go, only a native house, and no native'll take her now, now that the missionaries have got their knife in her."

Dr. Macphail looked at the falling rain.

"Well, I don't suppose it's any good waiting for it to clear up."

In the evening when they sat in the parlour Davidson talked to them of his early days at college. He had had no means and had worked his way through by doing odd jobs during the vacations. There was silence downstairs. Miss Thompson was sitting in her little room alone.

But suddenly the gramophone began to play. She had set it on in defiance, to cheat her loneliness, but there was no one to sing, and it had a melancholy note. It was like a cry for help. Davidson took no notice. He was in the middle of a long anecdote and without change of expression he went on. The gramophone continued. Miss Thompson put on one record after another. It looked as if the silence of the night were getting on her nerves. It was breathless and sultry. When the Macphails went to bed they could not sleep. They lay side by side with their eyes wide open, listening to the cruel singing of the mosquitoes outside their curtain.

"What's that?" whispered Mrs. Macphail at last.

They heard a voice, Davidson's voice, through the wooden partition. It went on with a monotonous, earnest insistence. He was praying aloud. He was praying for the soul of Miss Thompson.

CHAPTER VI

Two or three days went by. Now when they passed Miss Thompson on the road she did not greet them with ironic cordiality or smile; she passed with her nose in the air, a sulky look on her painted face, frowning, as though she did not see them. The trader told Macphail that she had tried to get lodging elsewhere, but had failed.

In the evening she played through the various records of her gramophone, but the pretence of mirth was obvious now. The ragtime had a cracked, heartbroken rhythm as though it were a one-step of despair. When she began to play on Sunday Davidson sent Horn to beg her to stop at once since it was the Lord's Day. The record was taken off and the house was silent except for the steady pattering of the rain on the iron roof.

"I think she's getting a bit wrought up," said the trader next day to Macphail. "She don't know what Mr. Davidson's up to and it makes her scared."

Macphail had caught a glimpse of her that morning and it struck him that her arrogant expression had changed. There was in her face a hunted look. The half-caste gave him a sidelong glance.

"I suppose you don't know what Mr. Davidson is doing about it?" he hazarded.

"No, I don't."

It was singular that Horn should ask him that question, for he also had the idea that the missionary was mysteriously at work. He had an impression that he was weaving a net around the woman, carefully, systematically, and that suddenly, when everything was ready, he would pull the strings tight.

"He told me to tell her," said the trader, "that if at any time she wanted him she only had to send and he'd come."

"What did she say when you told her that?"

"She didn't say nothing. I didn't stop. I just said what he said I was to and then I beat it. I thought she might be going to start blubberin'."

"I have no doubt the loneliness is getting on her nerves," said the doctor. "And the rain—that's enough to make anyone jumpy," he continued irritably. "Doesn't it ever stop in this confounded place?"

"It goes on pretty steady in the rainy season. We have three hundred inches in the year. You see, it's the shape of the bay. It seems to attract the rain from all over the Pacific."

"Damn the shape of the bay," said the doctor.

He scratched his mosquito bites. He felt very short-tempered. When the rain stopped and the sun shone, it was like a hot-house, seething, humid, sultry, breathless, and you had a strange feeling that everything was growing with a savage violence. The natives, blithe and childlike by reputation, seemed then, with their tattooing and their dyed hair, to have something sinister in their appearance; and when they pattered along at your heels with their naked feet you looked back instinctively. You felt they might at any moment come behind you swiftly and thrust a long knife between your shoulder-blades. You could not tell what dark thoughts lurked behind their wide-set eyes. They had a little the look of ancient Egyptians painted on a temple wall, and there was about them the terror of what is immeasurably old.

The missionary came and went. He was busy, but the Macphails did not know what he was doing. Horn told the doctor that he saw the Governor every day, and once Davidson mentioned him.

"He looks as if he had plenty of determination," he said, "but when you come down to brass tacks he has no backbone."

"I suppose that means he won't do exactly what you want," suggested the doctor facetiously.

The missionary did not smile.

"I want him to do what's right. It shouldn't be necessary to persuade a man to do that."

"But there may be differences of opinion about what is right."

"If a man had a gangrenous foot would you have patience with anyone who hesitated to amputate it?"

"Gangrene is a matter of fact."

"And Evil?"

What Davidson had done soon appeared. The four of them had just finished their midday meal, and they had not yet separated for the siesta which the heat imposed on the ladies and on the doctor. Davidson had little patience with the slothful habit. The door was suddenly flung open and Miss Thompson came in. She looked round the room and then went up to Davidson.

"You low down skunk, what have you been saying about me to the Governor?"

She was spluttering with rage. There was a moment's pause. Then the missionary drew forward a chair.

"Won't you be seated, Miss Thompson? I've been hoping to have another talk with you."

"You poor low-life bastard!"

She burst into a torrent of insult, foul and insolent. Davidson kept his grave eyes on her.

"I'm indifferent to the abuse you think fit to heap on me, Miss Thompson," he said, "but I must beg you to remember that ladies are present."

Tears by now were struggling with her anger. Her face was red and swollen as though she were choking.

"What has happened?" asked Dr. Macphail.

"A feller's just been in here and he says I gotter beat it on the next boat."

Was there a gleam in the missionary's eyes? His face remained impassive.

"You could hardly expect him to let you stay here under the circumstances."

"You done it!" she shrieked. "You can't kid me. You done it!"

"I don't want to deceive you. I urged the Governor to take the only possible step consistent with his obligations."

"Why couldn't ye leave me be? I wasn't doin' you no harm."

"You may be sure that if you had I should be the last man to resent it."

"Do you think I want to stay on in this poor imitation of a burg? I don't look no busher, do I?"

"In that case I don't see what cause of complaint you have," he answered.

She gave an inarticulate cry of rage and flung out of the room. There was a short silence.

"It's a relief to know that the Governor has acted at last," said Davidson finally. "He's a weak man and he shilly-shallied. He said she was only here for a fortnight anyway, and if she went on to Apia that was under British jurisdiction and had nothing to do with him."

The missionary sprang to his feet and strode across the room.

"It's terrible the way the men who are in authority seek to evade their responsibility. They speak as though evil that was out of sight ceased to be evil. The very existence of that woman is a scandal and it

does not help matters to shift it to another of the islands. In the end I had to speak straight from the shoulder."

Davidson's brow lowered, and he protruded his firm chin. He looked fierce and determined.

"What do you mean by that?"

"Our mission is not entirely without influence at Washington. I pointed out to the Governor that it wouldn't do him any good if there was a complaint about the way he managed things here."

"When has she got to go?" asked the doctor, after a pause.

"The San Francisco boat is due here from Sydney next Tuesday. She's to sail on that."

CHAPTER VII

That was in five days' time. It was next day, when he was coming back from the hospital where for want of something better to do Macphail spent most of his mornings, that the half-caste stopped him as he was going upstairs.

"Excuse me, Dr. Macphail, Miss Thompson's sick. Will you have a look at her?"

"Certainly."

Horn led him to her room. She was sitting in a chair idly, neither reading nor sewing, staring in front of her. She wore her white dress and the large hat with the flowers on it. Macphail noticed that her skin was yellow and muddy under her powder, and her eyes were heavy.

"I'm sorry to hear you're not well," he said.

"Oh, I ain't sick really. I just said that, because I just had to see you. I've got to clear on a boat that's going to Frisco."

She looked at him and he saw that her eyes were suddenly startled. She opened and clenched her hands spasmodically. The trader stood at the door, listening.

"So I understand," said the doctor.

She gave a little gulp.

"I guess it ain't very convenient for me to go to Frisco just now. I went to see the Governor yesterday afternoon, but I couldn't get to him. I saw the secretary, and he told me I'd got to take that boat and that was all there was to it. I just had to see the Governor, so I waited outside his house this morning, and when he come out I spoke to him. He didn't want to speak to me, I'll say, but I wouldn't let him shake me off, and at last he said he hadn't no objection to my staying here

till the next boat to Sydney if the Rev. Davidson will stand for it."

She stopped and looked at Dr. Macphail anxiously.

"I don't know exactly what I can do," he said.

"Well, I thought maybe you wouldn't mind asking him. I swear to God I won't start anything here if he'll just only let me stay. I won't go out of the house if that'll suit him. It's no more'n a fortnight."

"I'll ask him."

"He won't stand for it," said Horn. "He'll have you out on Tuesday, so you may as well make up your mind to it."

"Tell him I can get work in Sydney—straight stuff, I mean. 'Tain't asking very much."

"I'll do what I can."

"And come and tell me right away, will you? I can't set down to a thing till I get the dope one way or the other."

It was not an errand that much pleased the doctor, and, characteristically perhaps, he went about it indirectly. He told his wife what Miss Thompson had said to him and asked her to speak to Mrs. Davidson. The missionary's attitude seemed rather arbitrary and it could do no harm if the girl were allowed to stay in Pago-Pago another fortnight. But he was not prepared for the result of his diplomacy. The missionary came to him straightway.

"Mrs. Davidson tells me that Thompson has been speaking to you."

Dr. Macphail, thus directly tackled, had the shy man's resentment at being forced out into the open. He felt his temper rising, and he flushed.

"I don't see that it can make any difference if she goes to Sydney rather than to San Francisco, and so long as she promises to behave while she's here it's dashed hard to persecute her."

The missionary fixed him with his stern eyes.

"Why is she unwilling to go back to San Francisco?"

"I didn't inquire," answered the doctor with some asperity. "And I think one does better to mind one's own business."

Perhaps it was not a very tactful answer.

"The Governor has ordered her to be deported by the first boat that leaves the island. He's only done his duty and I will not interfere. Her presence is a peril here."

"I think you're very harsh and tyrannical."

The two ladies looked up at the doctor with some alarm, but they need not have feared a quarrel, for the missionary smiled gently.

"I'm terribly sorry you should think that of me, Dr. Macphail. Believe me, my heart bleeds for that unfortunate woman, but I'm only trying to do my duty."

The doctor made no answer. He looked out of the window sullenly. For once it was not raining and across the bay you saw nestling among the trees the huts of a native village.

"I think I'll take advantage of the rain stopping to go out," he said.

"Please don't bear me malice because I can't accede to your wish," said Davidson, with a melancholy smile. "I respect you very much, doctor, and I should be sorry if you thought ill of me."

"I have no doubt you have a sufficiently good opinion of yourself to bear mine with equanimity," he retorted.

"That's one on me," chuckled Davidson.

When Dr. Macphail, vexed with himself because he had been uncivil to no purpose, went downstairs Miss Thompson was waiting for him with her door ajar.

"Well," she said, "have you spoken to him?"

"Yes. I'm sorry he won't do anything," he answered, not looking at her in his embarrassment.

But then he gave her a quick glance, for a sob broke from her. He saw that her face was white with fear. It gave him a shock of dismay. And suddenly he had an idea.

"But don't give up hope yet. I think it's a shame the way they're treating you and I'm going to see the Governor myself."

"Now?"

He nodded. Her face brightened.

"Say, that's real good of you. I'm sure he'll let me stay if you speak for me. I just won't do a thing I didn't ought all the time I'm here."

Dr. Macphail hardly knew why he had made up his mind to appeal to the Governor. He was perfectly indifferent to Miss Thompson's affairs, but the missionary had irritated him, and with him temper was a smouldering thing. He found the Governor at home. He was a large, handsome man, a sailor, with a gray toothbrush moustache; and he wore a spotless uniform of white drill.

"I've come to see you about a woman who's lodging in the same house as we are," he said. "Her name's Thompson."

"I guess I've heard nearly enough about her, Dr. Macphail," said the Governor, smiling. "I've given her the order to get out next Tuesday and that's all I can do."

"I wanted to ask you if you couldn't stretch a point and let her stay here till the boat comes in from San Francisco so that she can go to Sydney. I will guarantee her good behavior."

The Governor continued to smile, but his eyes grew small and serious.

"I'd be very glad to oblige you, Dr. Macphail, but I've given the order and it must stand."

The doctor put the case as reasonably as he could, but now the Governor ceased to smile at all. He listened sullenly, with averted gaze. Macphail saw that he was making no impression.

"I'm sorry to cause any lady inconvenience, but she'll have to sail on Tuesday and that's all there is to it."

"But what difference can it make?"

"Pardon me, doctor, but I don't feel called upon to explain my official actions except to the proper authorities."

Macphail looked at him shrewdly. He remembered Davidson's hint that he had used threats, and in the Governor's attitude he read a singular embarrassment.

"Davidson's a damned busybody," he said hotly.

"Between ourselves, Dr. Macphail, I don't say that I have formed a very favourable opinion of Mr. Davidson, but I am bound to confess that he was within his rights in pointing out to me the danger that the presence of a woman of Miss Thompson's character was to a place like this, where a number of enlisted men are stationed among a native population."

He got up and Dr. Macphail was obliged to do so, too.

"I must ask you to excuse me. I have an engagement. Please give my respects to Mrs. Macphail."

The doctor left him crestfallen. He knew that Miss Thompson would be waiting for him, and unwilling to tell her himself that he had failed, he went into the house by the back door and sneaked up the stairs as though he had something to hide.

CHAPTER VIII

At supper he was silent and ill-at-ease, but the missionary was jovial and animated. Dr. Macphail thought his eyes rested on him now and then with triumphant good humour.

It struck him suddenly that Davidson knew of his visit to the Governor and of its ill-success. But how on earth could he have heard of it? There was something sinister about the power of that man. After

supper he saw Horn on the verandah and as though to have a casual word with him went out.

"She wants to know if you've seen the Governor," the trader whispered.

"Yes. He wouldn't do anything. I'm awfully sorry, I can't do anything more."

"I knew he wouldn't. They daren't go against the missionaries."

"What are you talking about?" said Davidson affably, coming out to join them.

"I was just saying there was no chance of your getting over to Apia for at least another week," said the trader glibly.

He left them, and the two men returned to the parlour. Mr. Davidson devoted one hour after each meal to recreation. Presently a timid knock was heard at the door.

"Come in," said Mrs. Davidson, in her sharp voice.

The door was not opened. She got up and opened it. They saw Miss Thompson standing at the threshold. But the change in her appearance was extraordinary. This was no longer the flaunting hussy who had jeered at them in the road, but a broken, frightened woman. Her hair, as a rule so elaborately arranged, was tumbling untidily over her neck. She wore bedroom slippers and a skirt and blouse. They were unfresh and bedraggled. She stood at the door with the tears streaming down her face and did not dare to come in.

"What do you want?" said Mrs. Davidson harshly.

"May I speak to Mr. Davidson?" she said in a choking voice.

The missionary rose and went toward her.

"Come right in, Miss Thompson," he said in cordial tones. "What can I do for you?"

She entered the room.

"Say, I'm sorry for what I said to you the other day an' for—for everythin' else. I guess I was a bit lit up. I beg pardon."

"Oh, it was nothing. I guess my back's broad enough to bear a few hard words."

She stepped toward him with a movement that was horribly cringing.

"You've got me beat. I'm all in. You won't make me go back to Frisco?"

His genial manner vanished and his voice grew on a sudden hard and stern.

"Why don't you want to go back there?"

She cowered before him.

"I guess my people live there. I don't want them to see me like this. I'll go anywhere else you say."

"Why don't you want to go back to San Francisco?"

"I've told you."

He leaned forward, staring at her, and his great, shining eyes seemed to try to pore into her soul. He gave a sudden gasp.

"The penitentiary."

She screamed, and then she fell at his feet, clasping his legs.

"Don't send me back there. I swear to you before God I'll be a good woman. I'll give all this up."

She burst into a torrent of confused supplication and the tears coursed down her painted cheeks. He leaned over her and lifting her face, forced her to look at him.

"Is that it, the penitentiary?"

"I beat it before they could get me," she gasped. "If the bulls grab me it's three years for mine."

He let go his hold of her and she fell in a heap on the floor, sobbing bitterly. Dr. Macphail stood up.

"This alters the whole thing," he said. "You can't make her go back when you know this. Give her another chance. She wants to turn over a new leaf."

"I'm going to give her the finest chance she's ever had. If she repents let her accept her punishment."

She misunderstood the words and looked up. There was a gleam of hope in her heavy eyes.

"You'll let me go?"

"No. You shall sail for San Francisco on Tuesday."

She gave a groan of horror and then burst into low, hoarse shrieks which sounded hardly human, and she beat her head passionately on the ground. Dr. Macphail sprang to her and lifted her up.

"Come on, you mustn't do that. You'd better go to your room and lie down. I'll get you something."

He raised her to her feet and partly dragging her, partly carrying her, got her downstairs. He was furious with Mr. Davidson and with his wife because they made no effort to help. The half-caste was standing on the landing and with his assistance he managed to get her on the bed. She was moaning and crying. She was almost insensible. He gave

her a hypodermic injection. He was hot and exhausted when he went upstairs again.

"I've got her to lie down."

The two women and Davidson were in the same positions as when he had left them. They could not have moved or spoken since he went.

"I was waiting for you," said Davidson, in a strange, distant voice. "I want you all to pray with me for the soul of our erring sister."

He took the Bible off a shelf, and sat down at the table at which they had supped. It had not been cleared, and he pushed the teapot out of the way. In a powerful voice, resonant and deep, he read to them the chapter in which is narrated the meeting of Jesus Christ with the woman taken in adultery. Then he closed the book and went down on his knees.

"Now kneel with me and let us pray for the soul of our dear sister, Sadie Thompson."

He burst into a long, passionate prayer in which he implored God to have mercy on the sinful woman. Mrs. Macphail and Mrs. Davidson knelt with covered eyes. The doctor, taken by surprise, awkward and sheepish, knelt too. The missionary's prayer had a savage eloquence. He was extraordinarily moved, and as he spoke the tears ran down his cheeks. Outside, the pitiless rain fell, fell steadily, with a fierce malignity that was all too human.

At last he stopped. He paused for a moment and said:

"We will now repeat the Lord's Prayer."

They said it and then, following him, they rose from their knees. Mrs. Davidson's face was pale and restful. She was comforted and at peace, but the Macphails felt suddenly bashful. They did not know which way to look.

"I'll just go down and see how she is now," said Dr. Macphail.

When he knocked at her door it was opened for him by Horn. Miss Thompson was in a rocking-chair, sobbing quietly.

"What are you doing there?" exclaimed Macphail. "I told you to lie down."

"I can't lie down. I want to see Mr. Davidson."

"My poor child, what do you think is the good of it? You'll never move him."

"He said he'd come if I sent for him."

Macphail motioned to the trader.

"Go and fetch him."

He waited with her in silence while the trader went upstairs. Davidson came in.

"Excuse me for asking you to come here," she said, looking at him somberly.

"I was expecting you to send for me. I knew the Lord would answer my prayer."

They stared at one another for a moment and then she looked away. She kept her eyes averted when she spoke.

"I've been a bad woman. I want to repent."

"Thank God, thank God! He has heard our prayers."

He turned to the two men.

"Leave me alone with her. Tell Mrs. Davidson that our prayers have been answered."

They went out and closed the door behind them.

"Gee whizz!" said the trader.

That night Dr. Macphail could not get to sleep till late, and when he heard the missionary come upstairs he looked at his watch. It was two o'clock. But even then he did not go to bed at once, for through the wooden partition that separated their rooms he heard him praying aloud, till he himself, exhausted, fell asleep.

CHAPTER IX

When he saw him next morning he was surprised at his appearance. He was paler than ever, tired, but his eyes shone with an inhuman fire. It looked as though he were filled with an overwhelming joy.

"I want you to go down presently and see Sadie," he said. "I can't hope that her body is better, but her soul—her soul is transformed."

The doctor was feeling wan and nervous.

"You were with her very late last night," he said.

"Yes, she couldn't bear to have me leave her."

"You look as pleased as Punch," the doctor said irritably.

Davidson's eyes shone with ecstasy.

"A great mercy has been vouchsafed me. Last night I was privileged to bring a lost soul to the loving arms of Jesus."

Miss Thompson was again in the rocking-chair. The bed had not been made. The room was in disorder. She had not troubled to dress herself, but wore a dirty dressing-gown, and her hair was tied in a sluttish knot. She had given her face a dab with a wet towel, but it was all swollen and creased with crying. She looked drab.

She raised her eyes dully when the doctor came in. She was cowed and broken.

"Where's Mr. Davidson?" she asked.

"He'll come presently if you want him," answered Macphail, acidly.

"I came here to see how you were."

"Oh, I guess I'm O.K. You needn't worry about that."

"Have you had anything to eat?"

"Horn brought me some coffee."

She looked anxiously at the door.

"D'you think he'll come down soon? I feel as if it wasn't so dreadful when he's with me."

"Are you still going on Tuesday?"

"Yes, he says I've got to go. Please tell him to come right along. You can't do me any good. He's the only one as can help me now."

"Very well," said Dr. Macphail.

During the next three days the missionary spent almost all his time with Sadie Thompson. He joined the others only to have his meals. Dr. Macphail noticed that he hardly ate.

"He's wearing himself out," said Mrs. Davidson pitifully. "He'll have a breakdown if he doesn't take care, but he won't spare himself."

She herself was white and pale. She told Mrs. Macphail that she had no sleep. When the missionary came upstairs from Miss Thompson he prayed till he was exhausted, but even then he did not sleep for long. After an hour or two he got up and dressed himself and went for a tramp along the bay. He had strange dreams.

"This morning he told me that he'd been dreaming about the mountains of Nebraska," said Mrs. Davidson.

"That's curious," said Dr. Macphail.

He remembered seeing them from the windows of the train when he crossed America. They were like huge molehills, rounded and smooth, and they rose from the plain abruptly. Dr. Macphail remembered how it struck him that they were like a woman's breasts.

Davidson's restlessness was intolerable even to himself. But he was buoyed up by a wonderful exhilaration. He was tearing out by the roots the last vestiges of sin that lurked in the hidden corners of that poor woman's heart. He read with her and prayed with her.

"It's wonderful," he said to them one day at supper. "It's a true rebirth. Her soul, which was black as night, is now pure and white like the new-fallen snow. I am humble and afraid. Her remorse

for all her sins is beautiful. I am not worthy to touch the hem of her garment."

"Have you the heart to send her back to San Francisco?" said the doctor. "Three years in an American prison. I should have thought you might have saved her from that."

"Ah, but don't you see? It's necessary. Do you think my heart doesn't bleed for her? I love her as I love my wife and my sister. All the time that she is in prison I shall suffer all the pain that she suffers."

"Bunkum!" cried the doctor impatiently.

"You don't understand because you're blind. She's sinned, and she must suffer. I know what she'll endure. She'll be starved and tortured and humiliated. I want her to accept the punishment of man as a sacrifice to God. I want her to accept it joyfully. She has an opportunity which is offered to very few of us. God is very good and very merciful."

Davidson's voice trembled with excitement. He could hardly articulate the words that tumbled passionately from his lips.

"All day I pray with her and when I leave her I pray again, I pray with all my might and main, so that Jesus may grant her this great mercy. I want to put in her heart the passionate desire to be punished so that at the end, even if I offered to let her go she would refuse. I want her to feel that the bitter punishment of prison is the thank-offering that she places at the feet of our Blessed Lord, who gave His life for her."

The days passed slowly. The whole household, centered on the wretched, tortured woman downstairs, lived in a state of unnatural excitement. She was like a victim that was being prepared for the savage rites of a bloody idolatry. Her terror numbed her. She could not bear to let Davidson out of her sight. It was only when he was with her that she had courage, and she hung upon him with a slavish dependence. She cried a great deal, and she read the Bible, and prayed.

Sometimes she was exhausted and apathetic. Then she did indeed look forward to her ordeal, for it seemed to offer an escape, direct and concrete, from the anguish she was enduring. She could not bear much longer the vague terrors which now assailed her. With her sins she had put aside all personal vanity, and she slopped about her room, unkempt and dishevelled, in her tawdry dressing-gown. She had not taken off her nightdress for four days, nor put on stockings. Her room was littered and untidy.

Meanwhile the rain fell with a cruel persistence. You felt that the heavens must at last be empty of water, but still it poured down,

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for all her sins is beautiful. I am not worthy to touch the hem of her garment."

"Have you the heart to send her back to San Francisco?" said the doctor. "Three years in an American prison. I should have thought you might have saved her from that."

"Ah, but don't you see? It's necessary. Do you think my heart doesn't bleed for her? I love her as I love my wife and my sister. All the time that she is in prison I shall suffer all the pain that she suffers."

"Bunkum!" cried the doctor impatiently.

"You don't understand because you're blind. She's sinned, and she must suffer. I know what she'll endure. She'll be starved and tortured and humiliated. I want her to accept the punishment of man as a sacrifice to God. I want her to accept it joyfully. She has an opportunity which is offered to very few of us. God is very good and very merciful."

Davidson's voice trembled with excitement. He could hardly articulate the words that tumbled passionately from his lips.

"All day I pray with her and when I leave her I pray again, I pray with all my might and main, so that Jesus may grant her this great mercy. I want to put in her heart the passionate desire to be punished so that at the end, even if I offered to let her go she would refuse. I want her to feel that the bitter punishment of prison is the thank-offering that she places at the feet of our Blessed Lord, who gave His life for her."

The days passed slowly. The whole household, centered on the wretched, tortured woman downstairs, lived in a state of unnatural excitement. She was like a victim that was being prepared for the savage rites of a bloody idolatry. Her terror numbed her. She could not bear to let Davidson out of her sight. It was only when he was with her that she had courage, and she hung upon him with a slavish dependence. She cried a great deal, and she read the Bible, and prayed.

Sometimes she was exhausted and apathetic. Then she did indeed look forward to her ordeal, for it seemed to offer an escape, direct and concrete, from the anguish she was enduring. She could not bear much longer the vague terrors which now assailed her. With her sins she had put aside all personal vanity, and she slopped about her room, unkempt and dishevelled, in her tawdry dressing-gown. She had not taken off her nightdress for four days, nor put on stockings. Her room was littered and untidy.

Meanwhile the rain fell with a cruel persistence. You felt that the heavens must at last be empty of water, but still it poured down,

straight and heavy, with a maddening iteration on the iron roof. Everything was damp and clammy. There was mildew on the walls and on the boots that stood on the floor. Through the sleepless nights the mosquitoes droned their angry chant.

"If it would only stop raining for a single day it wouldn't be so bad," said Dr. Macphail.

They all looked forward to the Tuesday when the boat for San Francisco was to arrive from Sydney. The strain was intolerable. So far as Dr. Macphail was concerned, his pity and his resentment were alike extinguished by his desire to be rid of the unfortunate woman. The inevitable must be accepted. He felt he would breathe more freely when the ship had sailed. Sadie Thompson was to be escorted on Board by a clerk in the Governor's office. This person called on the Monday evening and told Miss Thompson to be prepared at eleven in the morning. Davidson was with her.

"I'll see that everything is ready. I mean to come on board with her myself."

Miss Thompson did not speak.

When Dr. Macphail blew out his candle and crawled cautiously under his mosquito curtains, he gave a sigh of relief.

"Well, thank God that's over. By this time to-morrow she'll be gone."

"Mrs. Davidson will be glad, too. She says he's wearing himself to a shadow," said Mrs. Macphail. "She's a different woman."

"Who?"

"Sadie. I should never have thought it possible. It makes one humble."

Dr. Macphail did not answer, and presently he fell asleep. He was tired out, and he slept more soundly than usual.

CHAPTER X

He was awakened in the morning by a hand placed on his arm, and, starting up, saw Horn by the side of his bed. The trader put his finger on his mouth to prevent any exclamation from Dr. Macphail and beckoned to him to come.

As a rule he wore shabby ducks, but now he was barefoot and wore only the *lava-lava* of the natives. He looked suddenly savage, and Dr. Macphail, getting out of bed, saw that he was heavily tattooed. Horn made him a sign to come on to the veranda. Dr. Macphail got out of bed and followed the trader out.

"Don't make a noise," he whispered. "You're wanted. Put on a coat and some shoes. Quick."

Dr. Macphail's first thought was that something had happened to Miss Thompson.

"What is it? Shall I bring my instruments?"

"Hurry, please, hurry."

Dr. Macphail crept back into the bedroom, put on a waterproof over his pajamas, and a pair of rubber-soled shoes. He rejoined the trader, and together they tiptoed down the stairs. The door leading out to the road was open and at it were standing half a dozen natives.

"What is it?" repeated the doctor.

"Come along with me," said Horn.

He walked out and the doctor followed him. The natives came after them in a little bunch. They crossed the road and came on to the beach. The doctor saw a group of natives standing round some object at the water's edge. They hurried along, a couple of dozen yards perhaps, and the natives opened out as the doctor came up. The trader pushed him forward. Then he saw lying half in the water and half out, a dreadful object, the body of Davidson.

Dr. Macphail bent down—he was not a man to lose his head in an emergency—and turned the body over. The throat was cut from ear to ear, and in the right hand was still the razor with which the deed was done.

"He's quite cold," said the doctor. "He must have been dead some time."

"One of the boys saw him lying there on his way to work just now and came and told me. Do you think he did it himself?"

"Yes. Someone ought to go for the police."

Horn said something in the native tongue, and two youths started off.

"We must leave him here till they come," said the doctor.

"They mustn't take him into my house. I won't have him in my house."

"You'll do what the authorities say," replied the doctor sharply. "In point of fact I expect they'll take him to the mortuary."

They stood waiting where they were. The trader took a cigarette from a fold in his *lava-lava* and gave one to Dr. Macphail. They smoked while they stared at the corpse. Dr. Macphail could not understand.

"Why do you think he did it?" asked Horn.

The doctor shrugged his shoulders. In a little while native police

came along, under the charge of a marine, with a stretcher, and immediately afterward a couple of naval officers and a naval doctor. They managed everything in a businesslike manner.

"What about the wife?" said one of the officers.

"Now that you've come I'll go back to the house and get some things on. I'll see that it's broken to her. She'd better not see him till he's been fixed up a little."

"I guess that's right," said the naval doctor.

When Dr. Macphail went back he found his wife nearly dressed.

"Mrs. Davidson's in a dreadful state about her husband," she said to him as soon as he appeared. "He hasn't been to bed all night. She heard him leave Miss Thompson's room at two, but he went out. If he's been walking about since then he'll be absolutely dead."

Dr. Macphail told her what had happened and asked her to break the news to Mrs. Davidson.

"But why did he do it?" she asked, horror-stricken.

"I don't know."

"But I can't. I can't."

"You must."

She gave him a frightened look and went out. He heard her go into Mrs. Davidson's room. He waited a minute to gather himself together and then began to shave and wash. When he was dressed he sat down on the bed and waited for his wife to come in again. At last she did.

"She wants to see him," she said.

"They've taken him to the mortuary. We'd better go down with her. How did she take it?"

I think she's stunned. She didn't cry. But she's trembling like a leaf.

"We'd better go at once."

When they knocked at her door Mrs. Davidson came out. She was very pale, but dry-eyed. To the doctor she seemed unnaturally composed. No word was exchanged, and they set out in silence down the road. When they arrived at the mortuary Mrs. Davidson spoke.

"Let me go in and see him alone."

They stood aside. A native opened a door for her and closed it behind her. They sat down and waited in silence. One or two white men came and talked to them in undertones. Dr. Macphail told them again what he knew of the tragedy. At last the door was quietly opened and Mrs. Davidson came out. Silence fell upon them.

"I'm ready to go back now," she said.

Her voice was hard and steady. Dr. Macphail could not understand the look in her eyes. Her pale face was very stern. They walked back slowly, never saying a word, and at last they came round the bend, on the other side of which stood their house. Mrs. Davidson gave a gasp, and for a moment they stopped still. An incredible sound assaulted their ears. The gramophone which had been silent for so long was playing, playing ragtime loud and harsh.

"What's that?" cried Mrs. Macphail with horror.

"Let's go on," said Mrs. Davidson.

CHAPTER XI

They walked up the steps and entered the hall. Miss Thompson was standing at her door, chatting with a sailor.

A sudden change had taken place in her. She was no longer the cowed drudge of the last days. She was dressed in all her finery, in her white dress, with the high shiny boots over which her fat legs bulged in their cotton stockings; her hair was elaborately arranged; and she wore that enormous hat covered with gaudy flowers. Her face was painted, her eyebrows were boldly black, and her lips were scarlet. She held herself erect. She was the flaunting, impudent queen that they had known at first.

As they came in she broke into a loud, jeering laugh; and then, when Mrs. Davidson involuntarily stopped, she collected the spittle in her mouth and spat. Mrs. Davidson cowered back, and two red spots rose suddenly to her cheeks. Then, covering her face with her hands, she broke away and ran quickly up the stairs. Dr. Macphail was outraged. He pushed past the woman into her room.

"What the devil are you doing?" he cried. "Stop that damned machine."

He went up to it and tore the record off. She turned on him.

"Say, Doc, you can that stuff with me. What the hell are you doin' in my room?"

"What do you mean?" he cried. "What d'you mean?"

She gathered herself together. No one could describe the scorn of her expression or the contemptuous hatred she put into her answer.

"You men! You filthy, dirty pigs! You're all the same, all of you. Pigs! Pigs!"

Dr. Macphail gasped. He understood.

[*The End*]

ROPE

*by Charles MacArthur**

THE night clerk at the Y. M. C. A. Hotel said that it was a fine morning, and Mr. Stovich made ringing response.

"You said a mouthful! It sure is one swell day."

"For me"—he added significantly.

Mr. Stovich drolly winked his eye as he made this comment. It was the night clerk's cue, but he muffed it completely. Instead of rising to the occasion, he merely glanced at the clock, observed that it was six o'clock, and said:

"Ain't you up kind of early this morning?"

Stovich could hardly believe his ears. It was too astounding and incredible. He scanned the other's face in the expectation that his words would prove to be a jest. But no. Obviously, the man did not know who Mr. Stovich was, or what he was doing abroad at this early hour. Perceiving this, Stovich smiled coldly, and with considerable dignity remarked:

"I see you don't read the newspapers."

"Why—what do you mean?" replied the night clerk, with maddening lack of comprehension.

"You ought to know about that little neck-tie party we're giving them hunkies this morning."

Mr. Stovich accompanied this reproach with an indignant stare.

"That's right!" cried the clerk, instantly and profoundly impressed. "You're Mr. Stovich, ain't you?"

Stovich exhibited all his gold teeth in a very gratified smile. He nodded.

"The day clerk was tellin' me," continued the other. "Excuse me, brother, for not knowing you!"

"No offense," said Stovich graciously.

He smiled again and passed into the quick lunch that adjoined the hotel lobby, happily conscious that he was followed by a pop-eyed

* Mr. MacArthur wrote the famous play *The Front Page* in collaboration with Ben Hecht, with whom he is now working in the writing, casting, directing and producing of audible plays for the screen.

stare. Presently he was followed by the night clerk himself, who stood at a respectful distance while Stovich added a bottle of ketchup to a plate brimming with beans.

"It ain't hurt your appetite none!"

For reply, Stovich impaled a large chunk of bacon with his fork. It disappeared with a gurgling, sand-sucker effect.

"I bet them guys over in the jail ain't very hungry, hey?"

Mr. Stovich winked that such was undoubtedly the case. Encouraged, the night clerk sat down.

"Tell me something," he asked: "are you goin' to see 'em get it?"

This was too much. Stovich stopped eating to stare.

"I mean, are you goin' to be right in the same room with 'em—anyways near the scaffold?"

By shifting a quantity of bread and beans to the right cheek, Stovich managed to release a guffaw. His eyes glistened at the preposterous ignorance of the man.

"Am I?" he repeated—"Am I?"

His Adam's apple worked violently on a four-inch plunge. Soon it was possible for him to talk.

"I'm the guy," he explained modestly, "that does the dirty work."

A segment of his cinnamon bun went into his coffee with this, but he did not take his eyes once from the night clerk's face or risk missing out on a second of the ensuing surprise.

"Say!—no kidding—you don't mean—you spring the trap?"

"That's all!" replied Stovich. His smile spread in spite of his modest disinclination to exult.

"God! I wouldn't want your job!" The night clerk meant it.

"Why not?"

"No, thanks! Nix on that stuff for mine!"

"Oh, is that so?" Stovich interposed, with some heat. "If everybody felt like you do, where the hell would we be at? Huh? Your life wouldn't be worth a nickel! Maybe you don't give a damn, but did you ever stop to think of what would happen to your mother, and your sister, if there wasn't any cap'tal punishment? Supposin' some dinge came along and—how would you feel about that?"

The night clerk supposed that was one way of looking at it.

"You're damn right!" declared Stovich. "Besides, I guess you'd change your mind pretty quick if somebody handed you a hundred bucks every time you pushed a little button—"

"A hundred bucks!"

"*Three* hundred bucks this morning," Stovich corrected amiably. "We're goin' t' knock off three of 'em—in a row!"

He beamed at the other's undisguised envy.

"Yes, sir!—three pushes at a hundred a push! I guess that's kinda rotten, huh?"

"Pretty soft," said the night clerk, dismally. "I work three months for that."

"And I work three minutes." Stovich could not forbear from rubbing it in.

The night clerk proceeded to other questions. How many men had Stovich seen die? Was it true that they always loaded them up with morphine? How did they act when the rope was put around their necks? Was it a fact that doomed men stood constantly in need of a plumber?

Stovich resented this examination as a cow might resent the milking activities of an inexperienced farmhand. They had nothing to do with his three hundred dollar fee, and by degrees his manner became professional, reticent and strained.

Rising abruptly, he selected a sagging slab of strawberry shortcake from the glass counter. He was mindful of the extravagance of his purchase, but he salved his economical soul with the reflection that it was not every day that somebody handed him three hundred dollars. This was not the time for self-denial.

One shortcake led to another, and it was twenty minutes past six before Stovich had finished his repast. He helped himself liberally to toothpicks, paid his check, and strolled magnificently through the lobby to the street, with the night clerk twittering at his heels. It became annoying.

II

Yet this show of respect was pleasing, he was forced to admit. Certainly he didn't get any too much consideration at the jail. There he lived, breathed and had his being simply and solely as "Sap," an unfortunate sobriquet he had acquired in the first week of his career.

It had become so common an appellation that his real name had long ago been forgotten by his associates. "Sap" had a rather friendly significance now, but somehow Stovich could never forgive its definition. It hurt like a sore toe, and as he moved down the street toward the jail, he meditated for the ten thousandth time on all the reasons that may

have inclined his persecutors to fix so durable and so offensive a name upon him. He finally concluded, as he had every time he had considered the matter in the past, that the unpleasant expression and the motives for its application originated with one Ernest Fink, long an assistant warden at the jail.

Ernest, he reflected, had substantial reasons for wishing to belittle him. Briefly, Stovich had cut him out in the affections of Gracie Blaha—cut him out thoroughly and forever, and in less than a year's time.

He chuckled at the recollection of how he had courted Grace right under Ernest's nose, and he snorted out loud at Ernest's probable feelings when it became known that on this very day the lovely Gracie would be united in bonds of holy matrimony to the enterprising Mr Stovich. "Sap" Stovich, if you like. He should worry!

Grace didn't think he was a sap. Grace thought he was a swell fellow, with a smart noodle on him. Well, why shouldn't she? Hadn't he made good? "You're damn right I have!" he said aloud in answer to this speculation.

Not that Gracie hadn't been responsible for his success. He realized that if it hadn't been for her, he would be a bum, just like Ernest Fink and all the rest of those smart-alecks at the jail. But she had got after him in time. She made him move into the Y. M. C. A. Hotel and save his money, and when he didn't save it fast enough she saved it for him. Every week he handed her his pay, earned in guarding prisoners between executions. He reserved just fifteen dollars for his personal expenses. After every hanging, he handed her the hundred dollar fee untouched, and Gracie banked it all.

Leave it to her! In less than a year she had saved seventeen hundred cold bucks, and it was right there in the old bank in her name! None of those guys at the jail could touch him for any of it. He could tell them he didn't have it, and it would be the truth. Gracie had put him wise to that.

"You're a bad little Stovie, and you spend your money foolish," she used to tell him. "You let me save it, and we'll have a nice little nest-egg when we get married."

Gracie had promised to marry him the moment the bank account reached the two thousand dollar mark. Now the glad day was at hand. With the three hundred dollars that would be handed to him this morning, their savings would amount to two thousand dollars even, not counting interest.

He wondered how they would spend it. He supposed Gracie ought to have a silk nightie or two, if they didn't spend a dime on anything else. He knew where to go to get the very one. It was lavender with a lot of lace frills on it. Every day he had created a thousand intoxicating pictures of how she would look with it on, and now, when he considered how soon that picture would be materialized, he could scarcely repress his exhilaration.

"Oh, boy!" he exclaimed, and quickened his pace.

III

His heart sang within him as he drew near the jail, walking on the heel and ball of each foot. For the first time in four years, he smiled at the policeman guarding the jail door and wished the turnkey a jovial good morning. Joy mounted to the pitch of ecstasy, so that when he saw the hated Ernest, author and finisher of all his tribulations, he could hardly refrain from surprising him with the glad good news. Only the realization that the announcement would bring a pain to his rival more keen than his own unspeakable joy caused him to hold his peace, even when Ernest provoked him with an unusually surly greeting.

"Well, Sap! Yah finally got here, did ya?"

"Why, what's eatin' you?" inquired Stovich, nettled more by his tone than his use of the hated name.

"You'll find out when the boss sees yah," replied Ernest. "Don't yah know, we're making it an hour ahead of time today?"

Stovich soon discovered this circumstance to be true. The editor of the morning *Herald* had estimated that he could put on 10,000 extra city circulation if the three men could be conveniently hanged before the last dead-line of his paper. He had communicated this fact to the sheriff, who was more or less obligated to the *Herald* for his job. Consequently, the time of the executions had been advanced one hour to meet the emergency. It is true the victims uttered some complaint at this arrangement, but they were told that daylight saving had been declared during the night and that, if they didn't like it, they could do something else!

A dozen reporters were already on the scene. They were impatient. Stovich had no time to lose. Hurriedly, he visited the death chamber and tested the ropes with large bags of sand, equal to the weight of each intended victim. Ernest grudgingly helped him in deference to the growing lack of time. Presently the paraphernalia was ready.

The ropes were new and yellow and strong. The trap worked like a charm. Stovich removed the sand bags and reported to the sheriff that two of the doomed men could come and get their medicine.

The bootleggers, aldermen, baseball writers, professional athletes, doctors and reporters who had been ordained to witness the spectacle now presented their tickets and flocked into the death chamber, making a dive for the good seats. Good-natured confusion ensued. Much loud prophecy on the part of the veterans to the effect that the stomachs of the newcomers would not be equal to the exhibition. Much stout denial on the part of the newcomers. More banter of the same sort floated about the long, bare, white-washed room from the rows of benches that marched back from the high, stagelike scaffold to the furthestmost brick wall.

The hubbub was added to by a professional bondsman, slightly stewed, who knocked a turnkey unconscious for suggesting that he remove his hat and cigar. Stovich was well pleased at this diversion. The turnkey was one of his most inveterate persecutors, and he only wished he had done the hitting.

The tumult increased when a prominent prize-fighter appeared at the iron gate as escort to a couple of women, with whom he had been drinking the night through in anticipation of the morning's entertainment. The turnkeys by this time were thoroughly incensed at the treatment they were getting and massed to throw the tipsy trio out of doors. Loud recriminations issued from all the combatants and partisan cheers arose from the crowd.

The turmoil was such that the sheriff, who had been reading the death warrants to the doomed, came flying downstairs to investigate. A heated discussion followed. The pugilist's lady friends were thrown out and he was admitted to the death chamber on his promise of good behavior following the warm personal endorsement of Alderman Twombly and assurances from the crowd that he was a hell of a swell fellow when he was sober.

Matters were now in readiness.

The sheriff finished reading the death warrants and presently appeared on the scaffold with the warden. He teetered for a time on his toes, nodded to a dozen or so of his friends, and addressed a few by their first names. Evidently he had been playing poker with them the night before, as not a few took occasion to rail pleasantly of marked cards and the advisability of hanging the sheriff instead of the intended

victims. The sheriff silenced this criticism with a majestic wave of his hand as the shuffle of feet and the sound of voices drifted down the upper corridor into the death chamber.

"I am the Resurrection and the Life. . . ."

The strong intonation of the prison chaplain was repeated in faltering echoes by the doomed.

"Whoso believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. . . ."

Sing-song echoes, drawing nearer.

By the use of vigorous pantomime, the sheriff exhorted the audience to refrain from conversation and to extinguish cigars and cigarettes. It was futile. Desperately, he jerked his thumb in the direction of the rising voices of the dead-marchers. The spectators advised him to go back and sit down. His gestures became pleading. He cajoled them with winks and scowls and frowns. They told him to go and soak his head.

"And whosoever liveth and believeth in Me, shall never die. . . ."

The mortuary procession appeared upon the scaffold. First the chaplain in a shiny Prince Albert coat, affecting to read from a little book the passage he had cause to know backward and by heart. Then two of the murderers, manacled and supported by four guards. They shuffled mechanically forward, repeating the minister's words with blue lips and dry and swollen tongues.

Still mumbling the ritual, each was led to the trap. Stovich and Ernest deftly substituted their manacles for leather straps and enveloped them with shrouds.

"The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want. . . ."

With the rhythmic unison of a trained acrobatic team, Stovich and his partner fetched the ropes from the cross-trees of the scaffold. Quickly they drew each noose about its destined neck. One of the men made a frightful grimace, sticking his tongue out as far as it would go, rolling his eyes inward. The other's knees sagged horribly, but both recovered themselves and continued to recite the ritual as gallantly as possible. One even smiled a little, causing the dean of the hanging reporters to scribble a memo that "he died as cowards of his stripe always die—with a cheap effort at bravado." That was good stuff and had the advantage of being moral as well. The reporter had used it for each of the thirty-two hangings he had attended.

"He leadeth me beside still waters. . . ."

Stovich adjusted the muslin masks and stepped back, as the holy

clerk galloped into the beautiful Psalm of David. The electric button was fixed to the scaffold rail. It had been agreed that when the recitation reached: "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life . . ." he would press it and release the trap that is the criminal's last exit from the underworld.

The crowd caught its breath as the stiff stance of the sheriff and his aides indicated the end was at hand. Stovich nervously fondled the button to see if it was still in place. The condemned creatures shuffled their feet nervously, expectantly, as one who is about to take a five thousand foot dive. . . .

Cries rang down the steel corridor outside the chamber of death.

"*Sheriff! Oh, sheriff!*"

Guards burst into the room.

"*Governor's on the 'phone—says to call it off!*"

The newspaper reporters swarmed behind the sheriff as he gave a curt command and raced down the corridor to his office.

The chaplain closed his book, keeping the place with his finger. He murmured something to the two men, who stood motionless and trembling on the scaffold.

Instantly the sheriff returned. He verified the news.

"Well, I'll be damned!" Stovich exploded. He was thoroughly disgusted.

A thought possessed him.

"Say, Boss, how do you know it's the Governor? How do you know it ain't a joke, or maybe some of these birds' friends? Looks to me like somebody's tryin' to make a sucker out o' you?"

"It was him, all right," said the sheriff briefly. "He says they're innocent."

"Yah—I suppose!" spat Stovich bitterly.

"Hell!" he added. "Somebody's a fine fathead—that's all I got to say!"

"Don't take it so hard, Sap," consoled the sheriff. "He didn't say nothing about the other guy."

IV

But compared to the original program, the execution of the third criminal was a fizzle. Even the spectators thought so, and many of the more experienced veterans would not even stay to see it take place. It was entirely too much in the nature of anti-climax.

For the first time in his long, useful and industrious career, Stovich was thoroughly sour on his job. On the other occasions he had been stimulated by the thought that in pressing the button that worked the trap he was supervening in the prosaic affairs of men with the might of an angry God, ending the sinful schemes that originated in the gray gelatin of his victims' skulls—ending their loves, their hopes, their dreams—exterminating millions yet unborn. Really profound thoughts were inspired in his brain by that gentle pressure of his thumb. Often he toyed with the apparatus to demonstrate how imperceptible a push would send the two-ton mechanism of the gallows crashing and tear the souls from their habitation.

But today he was surly and sore. When the victim complained that the rope was adjusted too tightly, Stovich told me he was in a fair way of getting a sock on his smeller, and he did not wait for the prearranged signal to spring the trap. He had taken enough chances for one day!

At the customary buffet luncheon tendered by the warden to the spectators following the execution, Stovich could not eat for the first time in years, so complete was the collapse of his castles in the air. The sight of heaps of pork and cheese sandwiches, bowls of dill pickles, and cases of bottled beer, made him sick to his stomach, especially as the famous appetite of Ernest Fink was never better. Moreover, Ernest had divined the cause of his disappointment and was communicating his findings to everybody in the room.

"Look at the Sap," he bawled boisterously. "He's green around the gills! Two hundred iron men snatched right out of his mitt!"

Everybody joined in the loud laughter that followed this witticism. Stovich felt the blood rush to his head. He sensed that Ernest had somehow guessed the terms of his pact with Gracie Blaha. He felt that he was gloating over the delay in his plans. Unreasonably, he blamed Ernest for the reprieves and he longed to give him a black eye, right there in front of everybody.

Matters were not helped by Ernest's attitude. He advanced toward Stovich with a pork sandwich in one hand and a cheese sandwich in the other. His mouth was filled with both, but not sufficiently filled to prevent him from making hardly articulate jests on the financial blow Stovich had suffered.

"What were you goin' t' do with the dough—if you'd a got it?" he inquired suggestively, a leer lighting his face.

This was the last lash and too much to endure. Stovich thought of a devastating reply.

"Marry your girl, if you really want to know," he retorted. "Now laugh! I guess that'll hold you!"

Ernest's reaction to this news was surprising. He swallowed heavily and held out his hand.

"Old boy," he declared gruffly, "I know it. I heard about it this morning, and I want to congratulate you. Put her there!"

Stovich accepted his hand in odd astonishment.

"Who told you?" he asked.

"Gracie," replied Ernest.

He laid down one of his sandwiches and turned away, applying a pocket handkerchief to his eye.

Stovich was touched. He could well imagine the scene that had taken place—the lover's wonted ardor, and Gracie's cruel disdain. He gripped his rival's hand.

"Thanks, Ernie," he said, "I hope there ain't any hard feelings."

"Hell—no!" replied the other. "It's just the way it goes."

Ernest smiled.

Stovich thought it was the gamest smile he had ever seen, and pitied the aching heart it so lightly disguised. He began to think more of Ernest.

Congratulations ensued. Ernest offered Stovich a cigar.

"Thanks," said Stovich, sliding it into his upper vest pocket, "I'll smoke it later on."

He was pressed to have a bottle of beer, but he recalled an important engagement.

"It's with Gracie, Ernest," he vouchsafed awkwardly, "as long as you know about it anyways."

"Oh, well, then, we won't keep you," Ernest generously interrupted. "Give her my best regards when you see her!"

Stovich said he would and departed, pausing at the sheriff's office for his one hundred dollar fee. A loud peel of laughter arose from the sheriff's quarters as he took his leave of the jail. Stovich guessed that the boys were kidding Ernest. He felt avenged and forgiving.

The trysting place was an amusement park near the city limits, in deference to certain sentimental associations that Stovich nurtured in his breast. The first beautiful hours of his romance had passed amid the lights and thrills and pleasant music of the place. The precipitous perils of the roller-coaster had made it possible for him to encircle

Gracie's slender waist for the first intoxicating time; and it was among the tenebrous windings of the old mill that he had poured out his love and replaced Ernest as Gracie's cavalier.

Multicolored memories of joy made riot in his heart as he reached the outer gate. Magic casements opened out on fiery pleasures to be. The shuffling of feet, the cries of the barkers, the merry click of the turnstiles, made sweet medley with his thoughts. They were projected, too, in the pleasing chords of a street piano near at hand:

All the bells are ringing for me and my gal,
The birds are singing for me and my gal,
Everybody's been knowing to a wedding we're going,
And for weeks they've been sewing, every Susie and Sal.
The parson's waitin' for me and my gal!
They're celebrating for me and my gal,
And by and by, we're goin' to build a little house,
For two or three or four—or mo-o-o-o-re
In loveland, for me and my gal.

The song was an omen. Fired with its suggestion, he purposed to marry Gracie that day, willy-nilly, two thousand or no two thousand dollars. In fancy, he led her to the old mill and once again declared his passion as their craft bumped tranquilly along the dark mazes, past canvas Neptunes and plaster mermaids, out into the joyous sunshine. In fancy, she threw her arms about his neck and kissed him, signifying assent. Forthwith his mind envisaged a thousand and one rainbow nights with his beloved, rapturously explored the enpurpled borderlands of dreams, paused long in each vale and bower.

He was jarred rudely into consciousness by a tug at his sleeve and a hoarse suggestion:

"Guess your weight, mister?"

Stovich's first impulse was to kill the impious hoodlum who had arrested such a glowing train of thought, until it occurred to him that it might not be a bad idea to yield to the fellow's suggestion. First, he had not weighed himself in a long time. Second, there was a good chance that the man might guess wrong, in which event he had promised that the experiment would cost nothing. Finally, it was a cheap and interesting way to spend the time against Gracie's arrival. Moved by these reasons, he followed the shillaber to a tripod from which swung a chair.

The weight-guesser patted him professionally about the body.

Stovich smiled confidently. He did not see the fellow pause at his hip pocket and draw a cross with a piece of chalk, any more than he felt that same pocket explored and emptied of his wallet as he took his seat in the chair. It was expertly done.

"Well, well, well—what's this?" cried the weight-guesser as he gazed into his dial a second later. "Two hundred and forty pounds! I certainly got fooled that time!"

"You certainly did," laughed Stovich cheerfully, as he skipped out of the chair. He roared at the other's chagrin.

"It's the way I carry it," he volunteered. "You don't see no bay-window here, brother."

The weight guesser was no longer interested, however, and Stovich wandered proudly away. He continued to glow at his ability to carry weight deceptively for twenty minutes, when he began to wonder what had happened to Gracie. She was usually so punctual.

An hour went by. Stovich wanted to telephone her house, but he reflected that if he did so, Gracie would doubtless appear at the rendezvous and go away again the moment he entered the drug store booth. For another hour, he tried to figure out a solution to this dilemma. There was none. He was tired from walking up and down, but there was no place to sit. He was hungry, but there was nothing to eat.

Hold! Just inside the amusement park stood a frankfurter stand, operated by a swarthy Greek who enjoined passersby to come and get them while they were hot. Stovich meditated. It would cost him ten cents to enter the park but there were seats inside from which he could survey the entrance. And he felt that he was starving to death. Resolutely, he found a dime and entered and made his way toward the vendor of hot dogs.

But ere he approached, several small boys, possessed of many devils and an unreasonable antipathy to Greeks, swooped down on the stand and gathered up a dozen frankfurters that were toasting on the griddle; running away again faster than Balaam traversed the blue fields of Jerusalem. The proprietor uttered a terrible shriek and gave chase, calling God and man to his assistance. But the boys, anticipating pursuit, had stationed a large band of confederates among some trees hard by the stand. This auxiliary party now made a hasty sortie and began a successful sack of the establishment; perceiving which, the bewildered and bedeviled Greek turned from one pursuit to another, and so lost his chance to capture either or any of the robber band.

Delirious with rage and disappointment, he was taking stock of his frankfurters as Stovich drew nigh. The latter listened patiently to a long tale of injustice, delivered entirely in Greek, while a fresh hot dog was being roasted and inserted into a bun. It was heavily anointed with mustard and a pint of chow-chow at Stovich's request and under his personal supervision. He accepted it eagerly and took a large and greedy bite without preliminary payment.

"Say!" cried the Greek in no uncertain tones, "That's fifteen cents!"

Stovich nodded, being wholly unable to reply, and complacently reached for the pocket in which he kept his small change. It was empty, his last dime having been spent for admission to the park. The Greek watched his movements with catlike concern and growing alarm.

Stovich smiled with renewed assurance. He reached for his wallet—and stopped dead.

He sensed, rather than felt, a large emptiness in his back pocket. His jaw dropped; he stood as one stricken of the palsy.

"Well," said the Greek ominously.

"It's gone!" cried Stovich. "My wallet!—with a hundred dollars in it!"

"Yeh!" mocked the hot-dog entrepreneur. "Well, never mind your hundred dollars! How about my fifteen cents?"

"I had it," shouted Stovich, "when I left the jail!"

This remark was unfortunate, for at the word "jail" the Greek considered that he was again the victim of law-breakers and leaped half-way across the counter to seize what was left of the hot-dog from Stovich's shaking fingers.

Not content with the recovery of his property, he hurled it full into Stovich's face with a great resultant splatter of chow-chow and mustard sauce. Blinded for a moment, Stovich offered no resistance and did not wake up to his peril until the Greek, thoroughly angered by the vicissitudes of the day, jumped over the counter and punched him in the eye, screaming loudly for the police. Another and another blow followed the first. By the time the police came, one of Stovich's eyes was closed and some very costly bridge-work was a total wreck.

The police separated them and listened to his story. Painfully, he went over the events of the day in an effort to recall when and where his pocket had been plucked. Suddenly, and with a great light, he remembered the exploratory technique of the weight-guesser.

He was all for leading the officers to the spot at once, but they assured

him that it would be a great mistake for a man of his position to appear on the street in such a bruised and bemustarded condition, persuading him to wash his face first of all. While he was doing this, the sergeant sneaked down the street and warned the weight-guesser to get out of sight for the next few minutes. When Stovich conducted the police to the scene, the trimmers were far away, chair, tripod, wallet and all.

Stovich accompanied the officers to the police station to make a report. While there, he made free use of the telephone to call up Gracie. The landlady at her boarding house answered the 'phone.

"Why, I thought you knew!" she exclaimed in response to Stovich's inquiry, "Gracie's on her honeymoon!"

Stovich was speechless for a full moment.

"What's the joke?" he demanded thickly when words came.

"I'm not joking," responded the landlady. "They left for Niagara Falls this afternoon—she and Ernest Fink."

"Is that so?" roared Stovich. "What about my seventeen hundred dollars?"

"What about it?" asked the landlady, sourly.

Stovich swayed and hung up.

VI

None of the policemen would lend him carfare, and so he walked home. It was eight miles to the Y. M. C. A. Hotel. He reached the place at eleven P.M. The night clerk was on duty.

"Why, Mr. Stovich!" he exclaimed, noting the Serbian sunset under his left eye, "did you get hurt?"

"You're a smart guy, ain't you!" Stovich snarled.

"You *look* like one," he added, and retired to his room.

Long he sat there and pondered on the futility of life. Nearly two years of pinching and scrimping and hard work for a dirty, sneaking, double-crossing snake in the grass that he had treated like a white woman. Nothing had been too good for her. She could have had anything she wanted. Why?—because he had trusted her, and this is what he got. As far as that smirking, sneaking, smart-aleck husband of hers was concerned—well. . . .

He laughed. It was a hollow, bitter laugh. Mechanically, he began to undress. In detaching his watch and chain, he felt a bulge in his vest pocket and discovered the cigar Ernest had given him after his execution.

He was about to fling it from the open window when he was restrained by sober second thought. That particular cigar had cost him just seventeen hundred dollars—more than a year's hard work. It was the most expensive cigar ever made. He stared ironically at the brown wrapper and the gaily colored band.

He wondered how it would feel to smoke a seventeen hundred dollar cigar. Still wondering, he bit savagely at the end and struck a match.

As he might have expected, it was a piece of rope. Well, rope was his specialty. . . .

He smiled grimly at the jest and took a long, hard pull.

VII

There was a blinding flash and a deafening report as the cigar exploded.

AND MINSTRELS FLOWN WITH PRIDE

by John McClure

The proud Semiramis in hell
Is not so full of pride as we
Whose heads are giddy with old rhyme
And echoes of lost minstrelsy.

Though she remember Babylon
And Babylon's bewitching sin,
Her memories are not so rich
As those of rhyming gentlemen.

Drowsy with ancient dreams we sit,
Giddy with old forgotten airs,
More gorgeous than her pageantry
And sweeter than her dulcimers.

LITTLE GIRL

by Lee Pape

IT was one of those spring evenings when the air is heavy with a nameless, unbottleable perfume, and even the smallest stars are allowed out. One of those evenings when only the soulless can study. . . . Robins stood on a brightly lighted corner far from the dormitories and breathed deeply of it. His half-dreaming eyes viewed the countless strollers with friendly impartiality, his ears caught with intoxicating pleasantness the music from a dance hall across the way; athwart its high line of lighted windows couples zig-zagged as though they were on skates. After a bit Robins raised his eyes to this endless procession of flitting silhouettes and held them there in a sort of fascination. He thought.

"That music's alive! I haven't been in one of those places since I was a freshman."

Slowly, without definite plan, he walked across the street and looked through the glass doors. Some girls grouped at the head of the long flight of stairs that led to the dance floor saw him down there and beckoned. Then, when he swung open the door and entered, the group broke up with shrill giggles, possibly of shyness, but Robins continued mounting the steps until he reached a square landing containing a stout woman smiling hospitably behind an oblong table, on which Robins laid a half dollar. The stout woman, still smiling, returned him fifteen cents and a blue checkroom ticket.

"Wardrobe to your left at the top of the stairs," she said through her smile.

Robins climbed the remaining thirty steps, found the "wardrobe"—a boy's face squinting through a hole in the wall, and turned his attention to the dance floor. It was big and square, and, though the orchestra was half way through a one-step, girls of any age up to twenty were still sitting along the walls waiting to be asked to join the throng that flashed past their impatient feet. A cluster of youths, the undue length of whose coats betrayed that few of them were leaders of fashion, hung nervously about the doorway, afraid either of their own dancing or that of the untried expectant maidens.

The first girl that Robins danced with had seemed of a practicable size until, when he had got half way through asking her, she rose (as

far as she could) and showed her duplicity. She was one of those deceptive sitters-down who are in reality the tiniest girls imaginable. The initiated, who generally remember to look before they leap, can tell them by their toes, which are always pointed down to give their feet the appearance of reaching to the floor. No tall fellow can dance with them and half enjoy it.

The second girl that Robins danced with was tall and impossibly blonde and reasonably smooth, but every time Robins tried to interpolate a swagger step there would be a complication of feet, and, instead of being properly overcome with guilt, she would inquire haughtily, "What are you tryin' to do?"

The third girl (the first two really haven't anything to do with the story) attracted Robins' attention by the detached way she was blowing a wisp of hair off her forehead—as though it were somebody else's forehead she was blowing it off of, while her eyes gazed wide a million miles off into the future, or perhaps the past, which is also a million miles away. They were very light eyes, either gray or blue, depending on which was your favorite color, and the rest of her face was modeled with the most scrupulous attention to detail, from that wisp of hair on her forehead down to the little chin that made the turn of the oval. She was dressed in blue—dark blue, with a simplicity that can be made very expensive but which, with inborn expertness, may be approximately arrived at for, say, \$6.48.

She had, seemingly, heard his voice rather than his words; her eyes flew back to the present, and him. She nodded, not too impersonally, as the tall blonde girl had nodded. The orchestra was playing *Cecile*.

She performed the miracle of making the "lame duck" as floaty as a waltz. A miracle of miracles.

"How many more may I have?" demanded Robins while, after the encore, he was still gratefully applauding the unresponsive orchestra.

She looked up at him—continued, rather, to look up at him, from under half-lowered lashes. Then, with a sudden little parenthetical puff at the disobedient wisp, she handed him her dance card. There were several initials on it.

"How many more do you want?"

"All of them!" replied Robins promptly. He shoved the card in his pocket; they were partners for the rest of the evening. She followed as though he were using her mind to guide his feet. Her name was Jessie.

Between dances they talked. Her grammar was not all it might have

been, but her voice, shade for shade, startled Robins into memories of a voice that had rippled low and confidently into his ear at the Junior Prom. He had been confident that he should never hear a voice like that again.

Her intimate friends, she let him know, called her Little Girl.

The owner of one set of initials managed to track them down in their secluded corner. He was a good-looking youth with very broad shoulders and an aggressive chin. She smiled pleasantly up into his glowering face.

"I'm sorry," she said, "but I've promised this dance."

"Yeh," he agreed grimly, "you promised it to me." And he stood planted there looking doggedly down. She smiled up at him even more pleasantly.

"No," she said gently, "I promised it to *this* gentleman."

He glared at that gentleman as though glaring was but a feeble substitute for what he really felt inclined to do to him. But, after opening his mouth to express himself further, he suddenly thought better of it and stalked away from Robins' bland counter stare.

"I've never did that before," she confessed. "It makes me feel—funny."

"It's done in the very best families," Robins assured her. "If you had red hair and freckles, now, or maybe a squint, it would never do for you to pull anything like that. But all good subjects know that the queen can do no wrong."

She gave him a demurely suspicious look.

"Are you trying to kid me?"

"Far be it. . . . They're playing *The Geranium Rag*."

After that, in a way, the place contained only themselves and the music. It was truly music that lived, riotously in the one-steps, tenderly in the hesitations; only five musicians, but they were young and their pulses beat to the same rhythm; the violin was king and the drumsticks knew their place. Perhaps it was the music that now and then, at the end of a waltz, surcharged Robins' arm so that it was only with a special effort that he could remove it from about his partner—an act of liberation that for a fraction of time, seemed only to make the nestling Jessie a tighter prisoner.

There was a certain rare daintiness about her; a simple, artless tact that spoke in the shades of her voice, even, somehow, in her movements.

He asked if he might see her home.

Outside on the pavement the youth with the aggressive chin was standing in a group of other young fellows. He glared fixedly at Robins out of hostile black eyes. Robins returned the look just as fixedly, and the subject who did not seem to understand that the queen could do no wrong snorted and looked elsewhere. In her cocky little black hat and mannishly swagger "balmacaan" topcoat, Jessie again demonstrated that taste and a slim pocketbook can be the best of friends.

"Isn't that place," Robins ventured as they walked, "rather dangerous for a girl to see much of—alone? I heard several 'parties' being arranged, and some of the boys, while they were getting their hats and coats, were—well, talking pretty loud about their plans."

She declared solemnly, "I've never been inside a café in my life. You don't believe that, do you?"

"Of course I believe it. Why shouldn't I?"

"Why—I only meant that most of the fellows I've met up here don't believe nothing I tell them, hardly, and they don't seem to be surprised if I don't believe nothing they tell me, either. It's true, just the same. I been invited to join their 'parties' plenty of times, but I've always turned them down. I've been afraid. Not that I haven't felt like going, sometimes. I've heard so much about cafés—the kind that have cabaret shows. They must be wonderful! But I knew I couldn't go without drinking. I've never took a drink in my life. You don't believe that, do you? I mean, it's true, I haven't."

"'Cabaret show,' " said Robins after a pause, "'is only the made-in-Paris name for the cheapest kind of singing and dancing—bum entertainment with French dressing. And if you don't drink, it won't seem 'wonderful.' It never gets wonderful till about the third round. It might be a good thing . . . Little Girl, do you think you could trust me to show you the inside of your first café?"

"Oh! You mean—without drinking?"

"With the lid on tight."

Yes, she thought she could trust him—she knew she could. And she took a little tighter hold on his arm, sending an electric thrill through him. They got on a car, and off, and then there were two blocks to walk. Two dark, slumbrously echoing blocks with lights winking down them from the far end. They walked the second one rather slowly, and in the middle of it he turned and faced her, just, apparently, as she was stopping to look up at him, the hand that had been on his arm now fluttering about one of the top buttons of his overcoat. He

placed both his hands on her shoulders, and she made a little sound and drew away, only to return close, and closer. And then he had her in his arms and was kissing her . . .

In the darkness her light eyes, so near, seemed mysteriously dusky, almost black. And once again he was reminded, somehow, of the girl at the Junior Prom. . . . A dim palm corner instead of a dark street. And the sensation of it had not been so different from this. Yet *she* had been a "first family" girl. . . .

Jessie readjusted her hat to its original tilt and silently took his arm again, and they walked on.

The café was rather crowded. In front of a rattling piano on a narrow platform built along the wall, a youth with plastered-back hair was singing in nasal tenor. Robins selected an inconspicuous little corner table. A waiter hovered. Jessie bent mysteriously a little way across the table, and Robins leaned towards her inquiringly.

"How would it be," she whispered, "how would it be if I just ordered a drink and let it stand in front of me, like as if—as if—"

"As if—I see. What would you prefer to have—stand in front of you?"

"A—a Martini highball."

"Ain't no such animal. You mean cocktail."

"Do I? What's the difference?"

"A cocktail is short and stout, but it has a longer reach. And now about cats?"

"Why," Jessie hesitated, "I don't know. I—I can't think of nothing but lobster à la Newburg. I don't know what it is, but it's all I can think of."

"It's not a bad thought for a beginner," consoled Robins, and sent the waiter off. Up on the platform a girl with bold eyes and a bolder gown was shouting off key, while behind her, at the piano, a mere boy with long yellow hair managed to extract an incredible number of sounds per second.

"If I couldn't sing better'n that!" shuddered Jessie. The waiter returned with two yellow drinks and the lobster.

"It's not really so bad," explained Robins. "It's only that you can't get the fine points while that cocktail remains in the glass—where it's going to remain. Art owes a great debt to alcohol. I've known a little colored gin to rouse a really passionate appreciation of music in fellows who couldn't whistle Yankee Doodle so you'd be sure of it. But, I say,

how can I keep my mind on anything so mild as gin while you're blowing at your hair like that?"

"It's a habit," she explained hurriedly. "It don't mean I'm not paying attention. I always do that when I'm listening hardest."

"I am flattered. Still, it would require terrible concentration for a fellow to think straight while it's going on. If clothes make the man, it's 'habits' that make the woman."

"Woman?"

"Little Girl. Some bally little 'habit,' like a trick of the voice, or that blessed blowing stunt of yours, is liable to keep a chap awake nights, while the size of a girl's mind, or the dimension of her soul might not worry him any more than the name of her dressmaker."

She regarded him steadily.

"Who is it has a 'trick of the voice'?"

In his unpreparedness for this naïve uprearing of green eyes, he caught himself blushing.

"Oh, I don't know—nobody I know, especially. It was just an idea, merely—"

"That's all right. I just asked. *You* got a habit. You got a habit of twitching one corner of your mouth when you're going to say anything—funny like."

"Perhaps I just do it to let people know when they're expected to laugh."

"There—you did it then."

"Did I?"

And he did it again, while she laughed victoriously and sent upwards a joyous little puff that made the mutinous wisp sway triumphantly. And then they both laughed, and she said, "I like it, though. And I—I guess I know what you mean, because when I watch you doing it, it's—it's hard to keep my mind on what you're saying."

She suddenly dropped her eyes, and her face went a deeper pink than it owed to the shaded table lamp. Robins tingled all over and was silent because he was not sure that his voice would be steady. Oddly he felt almost as if, leaning to each other across the little table, they had kissed again. The high-pitched voice on the platform shrilled on, and stopped.

"Hear them clapping?" said Robins. Had she been deaf, she must have heard them. She raised her cocktail and for a still moment returned its wicked cat's eye stare.

"Do you mean," she said in a low voice, "that if I just drank only this one I'd really think that girl could sing?"

"I think one would do it. You see, cocktails are perfect mixers—it doesn't take 'em any time to get intimate with new acquaintances, though after you've known them a while they insist on introducing a few friends before they'll get really sociable. But that's the way the efficiency experts that run these places work it out—if they put lots of gin in the cocktails they can get a very expensive effect with very cheap singers."

Jessie put down her glass without taking her eyes from it.

"Good night!" she said.

"Then you're not so keen about your first dose of cabaret after all?"

"Are they all as bad as this?"

"Worse, some of them."

"Good night!"

"And you've no hankering after a second treatment?"

"With you?" She said it quickly, eagerly, and when, rather at a loss, he flushed and stammered a little, she added almost sullenly, "Oh, I know we won't never be seeing each other any more. You're a college boy. Ain't you?"

"College men, we'd rather hear it called. How did you know?"

"I can tell. To-morrow you'll go back to your books and the other rah, rah boys, and I'll go back to—to—"

"The store?"

"Yes, the store . . . and that'll be the end of it."

He looked thoughtfully down into his own untouched glass, and then troubledly, wistfully, back to her. Passionately he wanted to give denial, but all her double negatives, subtly-armed symbols of bewildering injustices, seemed suddenly to line up between them, each an affirmative of her hopeless creed.

"I'm afraid that's about the philosophy of it, Little Girl. We won't lie to each other, will we? And it's a rotten, rotten shame."

She gave back his gaze steadily, and into her eyes crept the oddest look, longing, bewilderment, fateful submission, before she answered gently:

"Oh, well, I ain't blaming *you* for anything, you know. It's a case of has-to-be, I guess. It ain't your fault. It ain't nobody's fault."

"It's *somebody's* fault!" Robins, striking the table with his flat hand, said it almost loudly. Then, his voice dropping almost to a husky

whisper: "Little Girl, it *must* be somebody's fault. Not yours. Not mine, and I might keep specializing on sociology and ethics and all that printed wind till I'm a hundred years old, and still not find out whose. And yet, in a way, you stand for all I like in a girl. . . ."

Her hand, raised just a little, stopped him. She was trying to smile; her lips were parted slightly. Suddenly she reached over and patted his hand, though he felt how her own fluttered.

"Don't" she said. He could scarcely hear her. "It's all right. I know."

For a passionate moment, in the dusky rose of the shaded light, their eyes met in silence; their eyes for a brooding moment annihilated that figurative space. Then the wisp of hair stirred as she sent it a determined little reminder that she was still Little Girl and no one else.

"Thank you for trying," she said, and her voice was suddenly back in control. "It was—very sweet of you, but I'm me and you're you and I know where I get off, I guess. And that's Markham's, to-morrow morning, at quarter to—"

"Markham's!" The word rang queerly. "Markham's! I might have known!" He laughed bitterly. "Oh, now, . . . say. That's rare! By all the laws of irony I ought to be John Markham's only son. Still, I'm his nephew—his adopted son, in a way; if it weren't for John Markham, I'd probably be bucking the world for a living long ago. So the situation is as perfect as we have a right to hope for in this imperfect world, isn't it, Little Girl? Markham's! And you've been stifled so that . . . oh, come, let's get out. I must have some air with this!"

The yellow-haired boy was assaulting the piano apparently with intent to kill as they made their way out; its hysterical protests reached them, faintly, out on the street. Slowly they retraveled the two dim blocks to the trolleys.

"I'm sorry I began that about never meeting no more," she broke the silence at length. "Everything's perfectly all right. Really. And I want you just to put me on my car without coming along. I'm not ashamed of the street or nothing, but I'm used to going home alone, and it would be more—more—"

"More perfect that way," he gravely finished for her. "Perhaps it would, Little Girl."

Far off a street car rumbled.

"And—you've showed me a most agreeable evening."

For the second time their lips found each other in the darkness of

that sleeping street. The starlit silence enveloped them as in a protecting shield while he held her close, and she did not move until his arms loosened, and the rattle of her car was very near.

THE LONG VOYAGE HOME

A Play in One Act

by Eugene G. O'Neill*

CHARACTERS

MAG, a barmaid

FAT JOE, proprietor of the pub known as Fat Joe's

NICK, a crimp

FREDA

KATE

DRISCOLL

COCKY

IVAN

OLSON

Seamen off the
British tramp steamer Glencarn

[SCENE—The bar of a low dive on the London water front—a squalid, dingy room dimly lighted by kerosene lamps placed in brackets on the walls. On the left, the bar. In front of it, a door leading to a side room. On the right, tables with chairs around them. In the rear, a door leading to the street.

A slovenly barmaid with a stupid face sodden with drink is mopping off the bar. Her arm moves back and forth mechanically and her eyes are half shut as if she were dozing on her feet. At the far end of the bar stands Fat Joe, the proprietor, a gross bulk of a man with an enormous stomach. His face is red and bloated, his little piggyish eyes being almost concealed by rolls of fat. The thick fingers of his big hands are loaded with cheap rings and a gold watch chain of cable-like proportions stretches across his check waistcoat.

At one of the tables, front, a round-shouldered young fellow is sitting smoking a cigarette. His face is pasty, his mouth weak, his

* This one-acter was one of the several plays O'Neill published in *The Smart Set* before he became famous as America's foremost dramatist.

eyes shifting and cruel. He is dressed in a shabby suit which must have once been cheaply flashy, and wears a muffler and cap. It is about nine o'clock in the evening.]

JOE:

(*Yawning.*) Blimey if bizness ain't 'arf slow tonight. I donnow wor's 'appened. The place is like a bleedin' tomb. Where's all the sailor men, I'd like to know? (*Raising his voice.*) Ho, you Nick! (*Nick turns around listlessly.*) Wot's the name o' that wessel put in at the dock below jest arternoon?

NICK:

(*Laconically.*) Glencairn—from Bewnezerry.

JOE:

Ain't the crew been paid orf yet?

NICK:

Paid orf this arternoon, they tole me. I 'opped on board of 'er an' seen 'em. 'Anded 'em some o' yer cards, I did. They promised faithful they'd 'appen in tonight—them as whose time was done.

JOE:

Any two-year men to be paid orf?

NICK:

Four—three Britishers an' a square-'ead.

JOE:

(*Indignantly.*) An' yer popped orf an' left 'em? An' me a-payin' yer to 'elp an' bring 'em in 'ere.

NICK:

(*Grumblingly.*) Much you pays me! An' I ain't slingin' me 'ook abaht the 'ole bleedin' town fur now man. See?

JOE:

I ain't speakin' on'y fur meself. Down't I always give yer yer share, fair an' square, as man to man?

NICK:

(*With a sneer.*) Yus—b'cause you 'as to.

JOE:

'As to? Listen to 'im! There's many'd be 'appy to 'ave your berth, me man!

NICK:

Yus? Wot wiv the peelers li'ble to put me away in the bloody jail fur crimpin', an' all?

JOB:

(*Indignantly.*) We down't do no crimpin'.

NICK:

(*Sarcastically.*) Ho, now! Not arf!

JOB:

(*A bit embarrassed.*) Well, on'y a bit now an' agen when there ain't no reg'lar trade. (*To hide his confusion he turns to the barmaid angrily. She is still mopping off the bar, her chin on her breast, half-asleep.*) 'Ere, me gel, we've 'ad enough o' that. You been a-moppin', an' a-moppin', an' a-moppin' the blarsted bar fur a ole 'our. 'Op it aht o' this! You'd fair guv a bloke the shakes a-watchin' yer.

MAG:

(*Beginning to sniffle.*) 'Ow you do frighten me when you 'oller at me, Joe. I ain't a bad gel, I ain't. Gawd knows I tries to do me best fur you. (*She bursts into a tempest of sobs.*)

JOB:

(*Roughly.*) Stop yer grizzlin'! An' 'op it aht of 'ere!

NICK:

(*Chuckling.*) She's drunk, Joe. Been 'ittin' the gin, eh, Mag?

MAG:

(*Ceases crying at once and turns on him furiously.*) You little crab, you! Orter wear a muzzle, you ort! A-openin' of your ugly mouth to a 'onest woman what ain't never done you no 'arm. (*Commencing to sob again.*) H'abusin' me like a dawg cos I'm sick an' orf me oats, an' all.

JOB:

Orf yer go, me gel! Go hupstairs and 'ave a sleep. I'll wake yer if I wants yer. An' wake the two gels when yer goes hup. It's 'arpas' nine an' time as someone was a-comin' in, tell 'em. D'yer 'ear me?

MAG:

(*Stumbling around the bar to the door on left, sobbing.*) Yus, yus, I 'ears you. Gawd knows wot's goin' to 'appen to me, I'm that sick. Much you cares if I dies, down't you? (*She goes out.*)

JOE:

(*Still brooding over NICK's lack of diligence—after a pause.*) Four two-year men paid orf wiv their bloody pockets full o' sovereigns—an' yer lorst 'em! (*He shakes his head sorrowfully.*)

NICK:

(*Impatiently.*) Stow it! They promised faithful they'd come, I tells yer. They'll be walkin' in in 'arf a mo'. There's lots o' time yet. (*In a low voice.*) 'Ave yer got the drops? We might wanter use 'em?

JOE:

(*Taking a small bottle from behind the bar.*) Yus; 'ere it is.

NICK:

(*With satisfaction.*) Righto! (*His shifty eyes peer about the room searchingly. Then he beckons to JOE, who comes over to the table and sits down.*) Reason I arst yer about the drops was cause I seen the capt'n of the *Amindra* this afternoon.

JOE:

The *Amindra*? Wot ship is that?

NICK:

Bloody windjammer—skys'l yarder—full rigged—painted white—been layin' at the dock above 'ere fur a month. You knows 'er.

JOE:

Ho, yus. I knows now.

NICK:

The capt'n says as 'e wants a man special bad—ternight. They sails at daybreak termorrer.

JOE:

There's plenty o' 'ands lyin' abaht waitin' fur ships, I should fink.

NICK:

Not fur this ship, ole buck. The capt'n an' mate are bloody slave-drivers, an' they're bound down round the 'Orn. They 'arf starved the 'ands on the larst trip 'ere, an' noone'll dare ship on 'er. (*After a pause.*) I promised the capt'n faithful I'd get 'im one 'and ternight.

JOE:

(*Doubtfully.*) An' 'ow are yer goin' to git 'im?

NICK:

(*With a wink.*) I was thinkin' as one of 'em from the Glencairn'd do—them as was paid orf an' is comin' 'ere.

JOE:

(*With a grin.*) It'd be a good 'aul, that's the troof. (*Frowning.*) If they comes 'ere.

NICK:

They'll come, an' they'll all be rotten drunk, wait an' see. (*There is the noise of loud, boisterous singing from the street.*) Sounds like 'em, now. (*He opens the street door and looks out.*) Blimey if it ain't the four of 'em! (*Turning to Joe in triumph.*) Now, what d'yer say? They're lookin' for the place. I'll go aht an' tell 'em.

[*He goes out. JOE gets into position behind the bar, assuming his most oily smile. A moment later the door is opened, admitting DRISCOLL, COCKY, OLSON and IVAN. DRISCOLL is a tall, powerful Irishman, COCKY a wizened runt of a man with a straggling gray mustache, IVAN a hulking oaf of a peasant, OLSON a stocky, middle-aged Swede with round, childish blue eyes. The first three are all very drunk, especially IVAN, who is managing his legs with difficulty. OLSON is perfectly sober. All are dressed in their ill-fitting shore clothes and look very uncomfortable. DRISCOLL has unbuttoned his stiff collar and its ends stick out sideways. He has lost his tie. NICK slinks into the room after them and sits down at a table in rear. The seamen come to the table, front.*]

JOE:

(*With affected heartiness.*) Ship ahoy, mates! 'Appy to see yer 'ome safe an' sound.

DRISCOLL:

(*Turns round, swaying a bit, and peers at him across the bar.*) So ut's you, is ut? (*He looks about the place with an air of recognition.*) An' the same rat's-hole, sure enough. I rimember foive or six years back 'twas here I was sthripped av me last shillin' whin I was aslape. (*With sudden fury.*) God stiffin ye, come none av your dog's thricks on me this trip or I'll— (*He shakes his fist at JOE.*)

JOE:

(*Hastily interrupting.*) Yer must be mistaiken. This is a 'onest place, this is.

COCKY:

(*Derisively.*) Ho, yus! An' you're a angel, I s'pose?

IVAN:

(*Vaguely taking off his derby hat and putting it on again—plaintively.*) I don' li-like dis place.

DRISCOLL:

(*Going over to the bar—as genial as he was furious a moment before.*) "Well, no matther, 'tis all past an' gone an' forgot. I'm not the man to be holdin' harrd feelin's on me first night ashore, an' me dhrunk as a lord." (*He holds out his hand which JOE takes very gingerly.*) We'll all be havin' a dhrink, I'm thinkin'. Whiskey for the three av us—Irish whiskey!

COCKY:

(*Mockingly.*) An' a glarse o' ginger beer fur our blarsted love-child 'cre. (*He jerks his thumb at Olson.*)

OLSON:

(*With a good-natured grin.*) I bane a good boy dis night, for one time.

DRISCOLL:

(*Bellowing, and pointing to NICK as JOE brings the drinks to the table.*) An' see what that crimpin' son av a crimp'll be wantin'—an' have your own pleasure. (*He pulls a sovereign out of his pocket and slams it on the bar.*)

NICK:

Guv me a pint o' beer, Joe. (*Joe draws the beer and takes it down to the far end of the bar. NICK comes over to get it and JOE gives him a significant wink and nods toward the door on the left. NICK signals back that he understands.*)

COCKY:

(*Drink in hand—impatiently.*) I'm that dry! (*Lifting his glass to DRISCOLL.*) Cheero, ole dear, cheero!

DRISCOLL:

(*Pocketing his change without looking at it.*) A toast for ye: Hell roast that divil av a bo'sun! (*He drinks.*)

COCKY:

Righto! (*He drains his glass.*)

IVAN

(*Half-asleep*) Dot's gude (*He tosses down his drink in one gulp* OLSON *seps his ginger ale* NICK *takes a swallow of his beer and then comes round the bar and goes out the door on left*)

COCKY

(*Producing a sovereign*) Ho there, you Fatty! Guv us another!

JOE

The saime, mates?

COCKY

Yus.

DRISCOLL

No, ye scut! I'll be havin' a pint av beer I'm dhry as a loime kiln

IVAN

(*Suddenly getting to his feet in a befuddled manner and nearly upsetting the table*) I don' li-ike dis place! I wan' see girls—plenty girls (*Pathetically*) I don't li-ike dis place I wan' dance with girl

DRISCOLL

(*Pushing him back on his chair with a thud*) Shut up, ye Rooshan baboon! A foine Romeo you'd make in your condishun (*IVAN blubbers some incoherent protest—then suddenly falls asleep*)

JOE

(*Bringing the drinks—looks at OLSON*) An' you, matey?

OLSON

(*Shaking his head*) Noting dis time, thank you

COCKY

(*Mockingly*) A-saivin' of 'is money, 'e is! Goin' back to 'ome an' mother Goin' to buy a bloomin' farm an' punch the blarsted dirt, that's wot 'e is! (*Spitting disgustedly*) There's a funny bird of a sailor man for yer, Gawd blimey!

OLSON

(*Wearing the same good-natured grin*) Yust what I like, Cocky I wus on farm long time when I wus kid

DRISCOLL

Lave him alone, ye insect! 'Tis a foine sight to see a man wid some sense in his head instead av a fool the loike av us I only wisht I'd a

mother alive to call me own. I'd not be dhrunk in this divil's hole this minute, maybe.

COCKY:

(*Commencing to weep dolorously.*) Ow, down't talk, Drisc! I can't bear to 'ear you. I ain't never 'ad no mother, I ain't—

DRISCOLL:

Shut up, ye ape, an' don't be makin' that squealin'. If ye cud see your ugly face, wid the big red nose av ye all screwed up in a knot, ye'd never shed a tear the rist av your loife. (*Roaring into song.*) We ar-re the byes av We-c-exford who fought wid hearrrt an' hand! (*Speaking.*) To hell wid Ulster! (*He drinks and the others follow his example.*) An' I'll strip to any man in the city av London won' dhrink to that toast. (*He glares truculently at JOE who immediately downs his beer. NICK enters again from the door on the left and comes up to JOE and whispers in his ear. The latter nods with satisfaction.*)

DRISCOLL:

(*Glowering at them.*) What divil's thrick are ye up to now, the two av ye? (*He flourishes a brawny fist.*) Play fair wid us or ye deal wid me!

JOE:

(*Hastily.*) No trick, shipmate! May Gawd kill me if that ain't troof!

NICK:

(*Indicating IVAN, who is snoring.*) On'y your mate there was arskin' fur gels an' I thortht as 'ow yer'd like 'em to come dawhn and 'ave a drink wiv yer.

JOE:

Pretty, 'olesome gels they be, ain't they, Nick?

NICK:

Yus.

COCKY:

R! I knows the gels you 'as, not arf! They'd fair blind yer, they're that 'omely. None of yer bloomin' gels fur me, ole Fatty. Me an' Drisc knows a place, down't we, Drisc?

DRISCOLL:

Divil a lie, we do. An' we'll be afther goin' there in a minute. There's music there an' a bit av a dance to liven a man.

JOE:

Nick, 'ere, can play yer a tune, can't yer, Nick?

NICK:

Yus.

JOE:

An' yer can 'ave a dance in the side room 'ere.

DRISCOLL:

Hurroo! Now you're talkin'. (*The two women, FREDa and KATE, enter from the left. FREDa is a little, sallow-faced blonde. KATE is stout and dark.*)

COCKY:

(*In a loud aside to DRISCOLL.*) Blimey, look at 'em! Ain't they 'orrible? (*The women come forward to the table wearing their best set smiles.*)

FREDa:

(*In a raspy voice.*) 'Ullo, mates.

KATE:

'Ad a good voyage?

DRISCOLL:

Rotten, but no matther. Welcome, as the sayin' is, an' sit down, an' what'll ye be takin' for your thirst? (*To KATE.*) You'll be sittin' by me, darlin'—what's your name?

KATE:

(*With a stupid grin.*) Kate. (*She stands by his chair.*)

DRISCOLL:

(*Putting his arm around her.*) A good Irish name, but you're English by the trim av ye, an' be damned to you. But no matther. Ut's fat ye are, Katy dear, an' I never cud endure skinny wimin. (*FREDa favors him with a viperish glance and sits down by OLSON.*) What'll ye have?

OLSON:

No, Drisc. Dis one bane on me. (*He takes out a roll of notes from his inside pocket and lays one on the table. JOE, NICK, and the women look at the money with greedy eyes. IVAN gives a particularly violent snore.*)

FREDa:

Waike up your fren'. 'Ow I 'ates to 'ear snorin'!

DRISCOLL:

(*Springing to action, smashes IVAN's derby over his ears.*) D'you hear the lady talkin' to ye, ye Rooshan swab? (*The only reply to this is a snore. DRISCOLL pulls the battered remains of the derby off IVAN's head and smashes it back again.*) Arise an' shine, ye dhrunken dog! (*Another snore. The women giggle. DRISCOLL throws the beer left in his glass into IVAN's face. The Russian comes to in a flash, spluttering. There is a roar of laughter.*)

IVAN

(*Indignantly.*) I tell you—dot's something I don' li-ike!

COCKY:

Down't waste good beer, Drisc.

IVAN:

(*Grumblingly.*) I tell you—dot is not ri-ight.

DRISCOLL:

Ut's your own doin', Ivan. Ye was moanin' for girrls an' whin they come you sit gruntin' loike a pig in a sty. Have ye no manners? (*IVAN seems to see the women for the first time and grins foolishly.*)

KATE:

(*Laughing at him.*) Cheero, ole chum, 'ows Russha?

IVAN:

(*Greatly pleased—putting his hand in his pocket.*) I buy a drink.

OLSON:

No; dis one bane on me. (*To JOE.*) Hey, you faller!

JOE:

Wot'll it be, Kate?

KATE:

Gin.

FREDA:

Brandy.

DRISCOLL:

An' Irish whiskey for the rist av us—wid the excipshun av our timperance friend, God pity him!

FREDA:

(*To Olson.*) You ain't drinkin'?

OLSON:

(*Half-ashamed.*) No.

FREDA:

(*With a seductive smile.*) I down't blame yer. You got sense, you 'ave. I on'y tike a nip o'brandy now an' agen fur my 'calth. (*JOE brings the drinks and OLSON's change. COCKY gets unsteadily to his feet and raises his glass in the air.*)

COCKY:

'Ere's a toff toast for yer: The ladies, Gawd—(*he hesitates, then adds in a grudging tone*)—bless 'em.

KATE:

(*With a silly giggle.*) Oo-er! That wasn't what you was goin' to say, you bad Cocky, you! (*They all drink.*)

DRISCOLL:

(*To NICK.*) Where's the tune ye was promisin' to give us?

NICK:

Come ahn in the side 'ere an' you'll 'ear it.

DRISCOLL:

(*Getting up.*) Come on, all av ye. We'll have a tune an' a dance if I'm not too dhrunk to dance, God help me. (*COCKY and IVAN stagger to their feet. IVAN can hardly stand. He is leering at KATE and snickering to himself in a maudlin fashion. The three, led by NICK, go out the door on the left. KATE follows them. OLSON and FREDA remain seated.*)

COCKY:

(*Calling over his shoulder.*) Come on an' dance, Ollie.

OLSON:

Yes, I come. (*He starts to get up. From the side room comes the sound of an accordion and a boisterous whoop from DRISCOLL followed by a heavy stamping of feet.*)

FREDA:

Ow, down't go in there. Stay 'ere an' 'ave a talk wiv me. They're all drunk an' you ain't drinkin'. (*With a smile up into his face.*) I'll think yer don't like me if yer goes in there.

OLSON:

(*Confused.*) You wus wrong, Miss Freda. I don't—I mean I do like you.

FREDa:

(*Smiling—puts her hand over his on the table.*) An' I likes you. Yer a genelman. You don't get drunk an' hinsult poor gels wot 'as a 'ard an' uneppy life.

OLSON:

(*Pleased but still more confused—wriggling his feet.*) I bane drunk many time, Miss Freda.

FREDa:

Then why ain't yer drinkin' now? (*She exchanges a quick questioning glance with JOE who nods back at her—then she continues persuasively.*)—Tell me somethin' about yerself.

OLSON:

(*With a grin.*) There ain't notin' to say, Miss Freda. I bane poor devil sailor man, dat's all.

FREDa:

Where was you born—Norway? (*OLSON shakes his head.*) Denmark?

OLSON:

No. You guess once more.

FREDa:

Then it must be Sweden.

OLSON:

Yes. I wus born in Stockholm.

FREDa:

(*Pretending great delight.*) Ow, ain't that funny! I was born there, too—in Stockholm.

OLSON:

(*Astonished.*) You wus born in Sweden?

FREDa:

Yus; you wouldn't think it, but it's Gawd's troof.

OLSON:

(*Beaming all over.*) You speak Swedish?

FRED A.

(*Trying to smile sadly.*) Now, y'see my ole man an' woman come 'ere to England when I was on'y a baby an' they was speakin' English b'fore I was old enough to learn Sow I never knew Swedish. (*Sadly*) Wisht I 'ad! (*With a smile*) We'd 'ave a bloomin' lark of it if I 'ad, wouldn't we?

OLSON

It sound nice to hear the old talk yust once in a time

FRED A.

Righto! No place like yer 'ome, I says Are yer goin' up to—to Stockholm b'fore yer ships away agen?

OLSON

Yes I go home from here to Stockholm—(*proudly*)— as passenger!

FRED A.

An' you'll git another ship up there arter you've 'ad a vacation?

OLSON

No I don't never ship on sea no more I got all sea I want for my life—too much hard work for little money Yust work, work, work on ship I don't want more

FRED A.

Ow, I see That's why you give up drinkin'.

OLSON

Yes (*With a grin*) If I drink I yust get drunk and spend all money

FRED A.

But if you ain't gointer be a sailor no more, what'll yer do? You been a sailor all yer life, ain't yer?

OLSON

No I work on farm till I am eighteen I like it, too—it's nice—work on farm.

FRED A.

But ain't Stockholm a city same's London? Ain't no farms there, is there?

OLSON.

We live—my brother and mother live—my father iss dead—on farm yust a little way from Stockholm I have plenty money now. I go back

with two years' pay and buy more land yet, work on farm. (*Grimming.*) No more sea, no more bum grub, no more storms—yust nice work.

FREDA:

Ow, ain't that luv'ly! I s'pose you'll be gittin' married, too?

OLSON:

(*Very much confused.*) I don't know. I like to, if I find nice girl, maybe.

FREDA:

Ain't yer got some gel back in Stockholm? I bet yer 'as.

OLSON:

No. I got nice girl once before I go on sea. But I go on ship, and I don't come back, and she marry other faller. (*He grins sheepishly.*)

FREDA:

Well, it's nice fur yer to be goin' 'ome, anyway.

OLSON:

Yes. I tank so.

[*There is a crash from the room on left and the music abruptly stops. A moment later COCKY and DRISCOLL appear supporting the inert form of IVAN between them. He is in the last stage of intoxication, unable to move a muscle. NICK follows them and sits down at the table in rear.*]

DRISCOLL:

(*As they zig-zag up to the bar.*) Ut's dead he is, I'm thinkin', for he's as limp as a blarsted corpse.

COCKY:

(*Puffing.*) Gawd, 'e ain't 'arf 'eavy!

DRISCOLL:

(*Slapping IVAN's face with his free hand.*) Wake up, ye divil, ye. Ut's no use. Gabriel's trumpet itself cudn't rouse him. (*To JOE.*) Give us a dhrink, for I'm perishing wid the thirst. 'Tis harrd work, this.

JOE:

Whiskey?

DRISCOLL:

Irish whiskey, ye swab. (He puts down a coin on the bar. JOE serves COCKY and DRISCOLL. They drink and then swerve over to OLSON's table.)

OLSON:

Sit down and rest for time, Drisc.

DRISCOLL:

No, Ollie, we'll be takin' this lad home to his bed. Ut's late for wan so young to be out in the night. An' I'd not trust him in this hole as dhrunk as he is, an' him wid a full pay day on him. (*Shaking his fist at JOE.*) Oho, I know your games, me sonny bye!

JOE:

(*With an air of grievance.*) There yer goes again—hinsultin' a 'onest man!

COCKY:

Ho, listen to 'im! Guv 'im a shove in the marf, Drisc.

OLSON:

(*Anxious to avoid a fight—getting up.*) I help you take Ivan to boarding house.

FREDA:

(*Protestingly.*) Ow, you ain't gointer leave me, are yer? An' we 'avin' sech a nice talk, an' all.

DRISCOLL:

(*With a wink.*) Ye hear what the lady says, Ollie. Ye'd best stay here, me timperence lady's man. An' we need no help. 'Tis only a bit av a way and we're two strong men if we are dhrunk. Ut's no hard shift to take the remains home. But ye can open the door for us, Ollie. (*Olson goes to the door and opens it.*) Come on, Cocky, an' don't be fallin' aslape yourself. (*They lurch toward the door. As they go out, DRISCOLL shouts back over his shoulder.*) We'll be comin' back in a short time, surely. So wait here for us, Ollie.

OLSON:

All right. I wait here, Drisc. (*He stands in the doorway uncertainly. JOE makes violent signs to FREDA to bring him back. She goes over and puts her arm around OLSON's shoulder. JOE motions to NICK to come to the bar. They whisper together excitedly.*)

FREDA:

(*Coaxingly.*) You ain't gointer leave me, are yer? (*Then irritably.*) Fur Gawd's sake, shet that door! I'm fair freezin' to death wiv the fog. (*OLSON comes to himself with a start and shuts the door.*)

OLSON:

(*Humbly.*) Excuse me, Miss Freda.

FREDa:

(*Leading him back to the table—coughing.*) Buy me a drink o' brandy, will yer? I'm so cold.

OLSON:

All you want, Miss Freda, all you want. (*To JOE, who is still whispering instructions to NICK.*) Hey, Yoe! Brandy for Miss Freda. (*He lays a coin on the table.*)

JOE:

Righto! (*He pours out her drink and brings it to the table.*) 'Avin' some-think yeself, shipmate?

OLSON:

No. I don't tank so. (*He points to his glass with a grin.*) Dis iss only inside-wash, no? (*He laughs.*)

JOE:

(*Hopefully.*) 'Ave a man's drink.

OLSON:

I would like to—but no. If I drink one, I want drink one tousand. (*He laughs again.*)

FREDa:

(*Responding to a vicious nudge from JOE's elbow.*) Ow, tike somethin'. I ain't gointer drink all be meself.

OLSON:

Den give me a little yinger beer—small one. (*JOE goes back of the bar, making a sign to NICK to go to their table. NICK does so and stands so that the sailor cannot see what JOE is doing.*)

JOE:

• (*To make talk.*) Where's yer mates popped orf ter? (*JOE pours the contents of the little bottle into OLSON's glass of ginger beer.*)

OLSON:

Dey take Ivan, dat drunk faller, to bed. They come back. (*JOE brings OLSON's drink to the table and sets it before him.*)

JOE:

(*To NICK—angrily.*) 'Op it, will yer? There ain't no time to be daw-dlin'. Sec? 'Urry!

NICK:

Down't worry, ole bird; I'm orf. (*He hurries out the door. JOE returns to his place behind the bar.*)

OLSON:

(*After a pause—worriedly.*) I tank I should go after dem. Cocky iss very drunk, too, and Drisc—

FREDA:

R! The big Irish is all right. Didn't yer 'ear 'im say as 'ow they'd surely come back 'ere, an' fur you to wait fur 'em?

OLSON:

Yes; but if dey don't come soon I tank I go see if dey are in boarding house all right.

FREDA:

Where is the boardin' 'ouse?

OLSON:

Yust little way back from street here.

FREDA:

You stayin' there, too?

OLSON

Yes—until steamer sail for Stockholm—in two day.

FREDA:

(*She is alternately looking at JOE and feverishly trying to keep OLSON talking so he will forget about going away after the others.*) Yer mother won't be 'arf glad to see yer agen, will she? (*OLSON smiles.*) Does she know yer comin'?

OLSON:

No. I tought I would yust give her surprise. I write to her from Bonos Eres, but I don't tell her I come home.

FREDA:

Must be old, ain't she, yer ole lady?

OLSON:

She iss eighty-two. (*He smiles reminiscently.*) You know, Miss Freda, I don't see my mother or my brother in—let me tank—(*he counts laboriously on his fingers*)—must be more than ten year. I write once in

while and she write many time; and my brother he write me, too. My mother say in all letter I should come home right away. My brother he write same ting, too. He want me to help him on farm. I write back always I come soon; and I mean all time to go back home at end of voyage. But I come ashore, I take one drink, I take many drinks, I get drunk, I spend all money, I have to ship away for other voyage. So dis time I say to myself: Don't drink one drink, Ollie, or sure, you don't get home. And I want go home dis time. I feel homesick for farm and to see my people again. (*He smiles.*) Yust like little boy, I feel homesick. Dat's why I don't drink noting tonight but dis—inside-wash! (*He roars with childish laughter; then suddenly becomes serious.*) You know, Miss Freda, my mother get very old, and I want to see her. She might die and I would never—

FREDA:

(*Moved a lot in spite of herself.*)

Ow, don't talk like that! I jest 'ates to 'ear anyone speakin' abaht dyin'.

[*The door to the street is opened and NICK enters, followed by two rough-looking, shabbily-dressed men wearing mufflers, with caps pulled down over their eyes. They sit at the table nearest to the door. JOE brings them three beers, and there is a whispered consultation with many glances in the direction of Olson.*]

OLSON:

(*Starting to get up—worriedly.*) I tank I go round to boarding house. I tank someting go wrong with Drisc and Cocky.

FREDA:

Ow, down't go. They kin take care of theyselves. They ain't babies. Wait 'ard a mo'. You ain't 'ad yer drink yet.

JOE:

(*Coming hastily over to the table, indicates the men in the rear with a jerk of his thumb.*) One of them blokes wants yer to 'ave a wet wiv 'im.

FREDA:

Righto! (*To OLSON.*) Let's drink this. (*She raises her glass. He does the same.*) 'Ere's a toast fur yer: Success to yer bloomin' farm an' may yer live long an' 'appy on it. Sköll! (*She tosses down her brandy. He swallows half his glass of ginger beer and makes a wry face.*)

OLSON:

Sköll! (*He puts down his glass.*)

FREDA:

(*With feigned indignation.*) Down't yer like my toast?

OLSON:

(*Grinning.*) Yes. It iss very kind, Miss Freda.

FREDA:

Then drink it all like I done.

OLSON:

Well—(*he gulps down the rest*)—dere! (*He laughs.*)

FREDA:

Done like ta sport!

ONE OF THE ROUGHS:

(*With a laugh.*) Amindra, ahoy!

NICK:

(*Warningly.*) Sssshh!

OLSON:

(*Turns around in his chair.*) Amindra? Iss she in port? I sail on her once long time ago—three mast, full rig, skys'l yarder? Iss dat ship you mean?

THE ROUGH:

(*Grinning.*) Yus; right you are.

OLSON:

(*Angrily.*) I know dat damn ship—worst ship dat sail to sea. Rotten grub and dey make you work all time—and the Captain and Mate wus Blue-nose devils. No sailor who know anyting ever ship on her. Where iss she bound from here?

THE ROUGH:

Round Cape 'Orn—sails at daybreak.

OLSON:

Py yingo, I pity poor fallers make dat trip round Cape Stiff dis time year. I bet you some of dem never see port once again. (*He passes his hand over his eyes in a dazed way. His voice grows weaker.*) Py golly, I feel

dizzy. All the room go round and round like I wus drunk. (*He gets weakly to his feet.*) Good night, Miss Freda. I bane feeling sick. Tell Drisc—I go home. (*He takes a step forward and suddenly collapses over a chair, rolls to the floor, and lies there unconscious.*)

JOE:

(*From behind the bar.*) Quick, nawh! (*NICK darts forward with JOE following. FREDa is already beside the unconscious man and has taken the roll of money from his inside pocket. She strips off a note furtively and shoves it into her bosom, trying to conceal her action, but JOE sees her. She hands the roll to JOE, who pockets it. NICK goes through all the other pockets and lays a handful of change on the table.*)

JOE:

(*Impatiently.*) 'Urry, 'urry, can't yer? The other blokes'll be 'ere in 'arf a mo'. (*The two roughs come forward*) 'Ere, you two, tike 'im in under the arms like 'er was drunk. (*They do so.*) Tike 'im to the Amindra—yer knows that, don't yer?—two docks above. Nick'll show yer. An' you, Nick, down't yer leave the bleedin' ship till the capt'n guvs yer this bloke's advance—full month's pay—five quid, d'yer 'ear?

NICK:

I knows me bizness, old bird. (*They support OLSON to the door*)

THE ROUGH:

(*As they are going out*) This silly bloke'll 'ave the s'prise of 'is life when 'e wakes up on board of 'er. (*They laugh. The door closes behind them. FREDa moves quickly for the door on the left, but JOE gets in her way and stops her.*)

JOE:

(*Threateningly.*) Guv us what yer took!

FREDa:

Took? I guv yer all 'e 'ad.

JOE:

Yer a liar! I seen yer a-playin' yer sneakin' tricks, but yer can't fool Joe. I'm too old a 'and. (*Furiously.*) Guv it to me, yer cow! (*He grabs her by the arm.*)

FREDa:

Lemme alone! I ain't got no—

JOE:

(Hits her viciously on the side of the jaw. She crumples up on the floor.)
That'll learn yer! *(He stoops down and fumbles in her bosom and pulls out the bank note which he stuffs into his pocket with a grunt of satisfaction.)*
KATE opens the door on the left and looks in—then rushes to FREDa and lifts her head up in her arms.)

KATE:

(Gently.) Pore dearie! *(Looking at JOE angrily.)* Been 'ittin' 'er agen, 'ave yer, yer cowardly dog!

JOE:

Yus; an' I'll 'it you, too, if yer don't keep yer marf shut. Tike 'er aht of 'ere! *(KATE carries FREDa into the next room. JOE goes behind the bar. A moment later the outer door is opened and DRISCOLL and COCKY come in.)*

DRISCOLL:

Come on, Ollie. *(He suddenly sees that OLSON is not there, and turns to JOE.)* Where is ut he's gone to?

JOE:

(With a meaning wink.) 'E an' Freda went aht t'gether 'bout five minutes past. 'E's fair gone on 'er, 'e is.

DRISCOLL:

(With a grin.) Oho, so that's ut, is ut? Who'd think Ollie'd be sich a divil wid the wimin? 'Tis lucky he's sober or she'd have him stripped to his last hapenny. *(Turning to COCKY, who is blinking sleepily.)* What'll ye have, ye little scut? *(To JOE.)* Give me whiskey, Irish whiskey!

THE CURTAIN FALLS

THE WHOLE ART OF A WOODEN LEG

*by Laurence Stallings**

"He jests at scars, who never felt a wound—"

I

I RECALL a man with two artificial legs who was a source of reckless inspiration to amputation cases at an army hospital, following the adventures of the Wilson Boys at Home and Abroad. He had been wearing his timber toes for twenty years, and he had such a firm belief in this means of locomotion that he transmitted his optimism to the doughboys—undoubtedly the hardest won converts of any proselytizing uplifter. One soldier with a double amputation immediately began the study of ranching at the hospital vocational school, following his conversion, saying that now since he was starting anew in life, he was done with clerkships in the city. The great wide open spaces for him, he insisted, and he longed to clamp his laminated knees around some wall-eyed, rip-snorting pinto of a cow hoss. This Don Quixote soon had enlisted a corporal to ride the range with him, and he chose for his Sancho Panza, one badly pruned and docked by a light Maxim rifle.

I never heard again from their brave venture, for I was transferred to another hospital shortly after they commenced the course. Yet, when the sun is sometimes sinking over the Hotel Astor, and I am clinging to the rail that winds down into the caverns of the subway under Times Square, shifting the lumber leg from step to step, I grow downright envious of those two boys on the plains as they go about their simple tasks of breaking stallions and roping cow critters.

Magazines were at pains to uplift soldiers who shed a leg or two for the cause of Liberty Bonds. They published narratives of thrilling battles gained by cripples in the face of terrific commercial odds, with the usual happy ending in a bank president's office for some chap who came to pieces every night just before retiring. I was in an amputation ward at the time they began to appear, and can testify these one-sided epics were received with unflagging admiration by the men awaiting a second blooming. Recently the stories and articles have changed complexion. Now the authors exude fun and comicality, and chortle

* Laurence Stallings lost a leg as a captain of U. S. Marines in the World War. He was co-author of *What Price Glory?* and now writes for the motion pictures and for the stage.

to describe the joys of owning a harelip or of possessing a couple of club feet. Long may their ills wax feeble, if particular amusement is derived from them.

Yet in this five-foot shelf of ambulatory *Iliads*, not once has a narrator been thoughtful to describe the bits of daily deftness that diffuse into and color the complexion of life. We have shared with limping Ulysses the ardors and trials of the commercial and financial wanderings. But what a pegleg Hercules at a garden party? How now of crutchful Theseus, entraining, not to slay the Minotaur but to catch the Bronx Express?

II

In this essay there may be some pointers for those about to become one-legged men, or preparing to gird on their first brightly varnished extremity, but nothing could be farther from its intent than the business of cheering them up. I address myself primarily to my public, that army of men and women who eye me suspiciously in the church, the theatre and the busy marts of trade; to those who are highly curious about this unsatisfactory adjunct to locomotion and whose name, like the leaves of the Black Forest, is legion.

The most admirable mutile I recall was Long John Silver. Stevenson wrought this bit of sterling Silver from an old crony, imagining how his friend might conduct himself were he shorn of a thigh and set aboard the *Hispaniola* as a pirate bound for Treasure Island. Long John was essentially a noble man, whether one subscribes to his patents of nobility or not, and he wore his crutch with the feathery grace of a Fragonard Shepherdess. John Silver was no sordid murderer of the type that Conan Doyle describes in "The Sign of the Four," that avenging convict who unstrapped his leg and clove through the skull of the island guard. Stevenson was too discerning to strap a leg to the brutal sprite that danced in Silver's breast. He carved the man free from such a dragging association. Long John needed no ribband to stick in his coat as a sop to vanity. His crutch was his decoration, a very pointer to his wit, and a fearsome weapon in a fray.

So in discussing the whole art of a wooden leg, let it be understood that this impedimental aid to locomotion ties one securely to the wooden things of life. One can never soar, even after a trolley car. Stevenson sensed this when he left Silver free to fling away his disability with a single gesture and scale the stockade fence without a

hand-up, after he had spat in the spring. R. L. S. showed himself a master in the characterization. How many who fashion romantic tales bring their hero home with an empty coatsleeve! But Stevenson, as I remember, is the only author brave enough to pour romance into an empty pants-leg.

Long John Silver's attitude toward life is best for a one-legged man; a certain humble impudence hedged him like divinity doth a king. William Hazlitt, as Stevenson says somewhere, stated that a fresh, natural impudence is the best friend of a young man. Most of us who saved the world for "Democracy" are yet youngish, and Hazlitt offers excellent counsel. One must not mistake this impudent carriage to imply a thick-skinned temerity. Impudence is not a quality of being phlegmatic, either; one must remain a bit too sensitive, and yet conceal this under a mask of spirited daring.

To illustrate the point, let us take the business of a wooden-legger entering an elevator, which entails a certain rash and preliminary plan of attack. The elevator of a modern sky-scraper rises like an adder and drops like a hawk. Your uniped is nearly certain of losing his balance at the origin of either the upward or the downward stress. He might by heroic measures restore his equilibrium, but the feat requires much waving of arms, and it is unpleasant to apologize for having driven an old lady's nose glasses into her eyes. Therefore, it is artful to select a large, quietly well-dressed man, and to assume a position in convenient proximity upon entering the car. At the slightest disturbance of one's balance after the operator shuts the gates, one must lunge fiercely into the large person. In this way one offends only a single person. He has been chosen previously as a man with an air of good breeding; one who will accept the merest nod of apology. His bulk has prevented the lunging impulse from being transferred to other persons within the car. It is all most simply done.

III

If only some of these gentlemen who air their successful ills in the magazines might have given us the technique. I have painfully felt out for myself! If we had known the proper form when we left hospitals two years ago, how many slings and arrows of an awkward etiquette all of us might have avoided. The fact that a one-legged man works his way to the presidency of a bank is nothing extraordinary. Everyone knows that bank presidents are selected for their heads. The life story

of a one-legged chorus girl who won the banker would be more interesting, and intensely informative. To be sure, if the chairman of the board of a large federal depository happens to be a half-wit, there is a profitable article in the making. He might tell us just how he contrived to submerge the bad half of his wit during his early years at stockholders' meetings. And he could throw in some human interest details on how once, when called upon to reply to the Comptroller of the Currency at a Rotary banquet, he arose and whistled the first six bars of "Oh, Listen to the Mocking Bird."

While we lay in hospitals in plaster casts, waiting for the St. Louis Churn and Cider Press Company to make an allotment of legs, regulation Victory No. 1, Army specifications, series A, Mark iii, why did not some cripple write an essay on "The Comparative Methods of One-Legged Men in Viewing the Drama"? Theatre-going takes more concentration than any other pursuit of the one-legger. From the outset there must be strict adherence to certain details. It is advisable to obtain an aisle seat, but if the show is at all popular the four minute men have staked out claims along the aisle long before the duration of the war men have scraped together enough pennies to buy into the house at all. So one plunks down the cash for two seats in row seventeen, screws up all the impudence he can muster, and sets out for a pleasant evening.

Creeping through the crowded row, one is sure to encounter a woman who looks at one through her lorgnette, frowns and straightway decides to remain seated while this strange, gawky creature waddles past. She regrets this decision when one's heavy, curly maple foot is planted fairly upon her satin shod toes. There is practically no sensation in a curly maple foot, and the whole weight of the body is shifted to the wooden socket before the woman drops her lorgnette and begins her outcry. Even then there is an appreciable lapse of time before one can grope about in this constricted space for a fresh purchase for the foot with sensation, and remove the sensational one to less painful surroundings. It is best to maintain an air of superb indifference during the performance that follows, no matter how often she or others in her party glower at one.

Sitting in the aisle seat does not require as much nonchalance as the in-the-middle style, unless a woman sits directly ahead. I recall once being placed in this situation with a shiver of embarrassment. I became absorbed in a drama unfolding itself upon the stage and paid

scant heed to the erring foot. The hero of the play was kissing his sweetheart in fond farewell, while offstage the drums of his gallant regiment were thumping martially. The drum beats evoked memories, and while its owner became stirred by them the ubiquitous extremity crept forward and nestled companionably among the feet of the woman ahead. I was first made aware of this highly objectionable familiarity, impersonal though it certainly was, by the woman's mother, who turned and glared for a moment before denouncing me in firm, well-heard tones.

The experienced uniped theatre-goer should learn to park his badge of patriotism in the aisle. There it will lurk to beset the citizens of a grateful republic. At least those who stumble over it there can glower their heads off and be no better for it in the semi-darkness of the house.

IV

A wooden leg is priceless in the matter of sports. Few of us can make even the poorest attempts on a tennis court, and most of us avoid owning a racquet at all. Now tennis is a queer pursuit in one respect; all who play should be of skill and aptitude for the game, for nothing is so lamentable as a poor tennis-player. Potential Tildens look upon duffers with extreme disfavor, and by their glances seem to demand of the booby why he should disgrace this ancient test of muscle co-ordination and skill. Therefore your one-legger not only does not play, but exaggerates how well he could play before the war, without being looked upon as an upstart liar.

On the other hand, he can play golf after a fashion and with a perfect alibi. He probably tops his drive without all the preliminary wiggling that usually precedes this miserable performance. But his alibi is puncture proof; not his own well-schooled sense of rhythm and direction caused this lamentable failure, but the knee joint, having recently been tightened at the leg garage, disarticulated too quickly at the peak of the motion.

There is a technique I have worked out for one-leggers who follow football games. Obviously one cannot enjoy a game in the cramped quarters of the grandstand, especially if the leg is going to trip every other spectator who passes, eyes intent upon the kick-off. So it is advisable to obtain a seat upon the side-lines. Here one's position is precarious indeed, and gives a sporting zest to the entire excursion; your one-legged man cannot spring quickly out of the path of three

maddened halfbacks pursuing a fumbled ball into the crowds. But, you ask, shall one sit behind a large person, as in the elevator instance? Not a bit of it!

The large person might be an excellent bulwark were the match one with high power rifles, but not for a football game. One should sit by a frail, elderly person. Then when the crucial fumble occurs, and all about one are dashing wildly from the course of the cyclonic halfbacks, one can by force of arms long trained in swinging ape-like along subway cars, pin the frail elderly person to one's breast as a buckler against the attack and injury. Your large man would break away where the hapless elderly person hasn't power to tear from your frantic arms. This, with possible slight variation, is a technique applicable to basketball, baseball and all games played with hard missiles.

The Eighteenth Amendment has been a great boon to the whole art of a wooden leg. Nothing has so contributed to artistic self-restraint among the wall flowers at a dance as the absence of the country club bar. Only extraordinary skill in using a wooden leg, or a colossal vanity, permits of one dancing even with one's wife. Naturally a one-legger would be turned into a bar fly of the first order were there a bar to buzz around. I even now can recall the peculiar fragrance of the veterans who told me stories of Lee and Grant when as a child I watched the old men gather for reunions. And I can understand now why so many of them drank. There was nothing else left for them to do. Impudence fails me bleakly at a dance. There is no consolation save that which comes in a bottle, or in a certain philosophical viewpoint, as in Chaucer's confession to Rousemounde:

*"That at a revel whan that I see you daunce,
It is an oynement unto my wounde,
Though ye to me ne do no daliaunce."*

Lest the reader should think this post-war existence only a series of embarrassments for the salvage from civilizations' greatest conflict, I must hasten to offer proof to the contrary. Every day in a sizable city is a series of shivery excitements. There is small need for a one-legger to mourn because he can never again hunt tigers in India or elephants in the Congo. What could be fairer sport than matching wits with taxi-drivers and staking lives against a fifty dollar fine for some dowager in an elephantine limousine? Tiger hunters have rifles, and ivory hunters may always flee to trees for safety. Here in New York, with all

of us figuratively on the edge of the jungle, rifles and trees are taboo, and the sport is more equalized.

Here your one-legged man is a type that can neither depend upon self-preservation by flight, nor can he stand and repel the shock of those carnivora capable of overtaking him. So what does our good Mother Nature do for this uniped? She gives his brain a nice sense in calculating the speed of automobiles that bipeds do not possess. She endows him with a sixth sense in divining just what taxicab may be stopped by an uplifted hand. This biological abnormality, therefore, with his curiously equipped brain, arrives at a crossing where there is no corner cop, in the midst of the after-theatre traffic.

A glance up and down the fairway, and a second swift survey of the side streets, and he boldly plunges out into the danger zone. He has calculated to a fraction of a second just when all cars crowding on this particular crossing will pass any number of given points. His pace is a swinging, rhythmical one by nature of his artificial propulsion, and if the streets are at all oily, he can neither retard nor accelerate his speed. He must continue forward.

Could anything be more exciting? Here in a sordid city he is having all the thrills of those gentlemen who play polo and thus arouse their atrophied senses of self-preservation. His heart is beating fast, a joyous tom-tom of fear and exhilaration, as the switch of a fender brushes his coat; another beast slightly to the rear passes across his trail with an angry whirr, lashing its non-skid chains in fury. A long black monster, able to crush him without a sound, purrs past without having spotted him. Still he continues, rhythmically and slowly, across the trail. He is almost out of danger when, like a tiger in its fury, a yellow beast of a cab is upon him. With the faith of Joshua your curious animal raises his hand swiftly, agonizingly, and the brakes whine with suppressed ferocity as the hunted one gains the sanctuary of the sidewalk!

THE BLUE SPHERE

by Theodore Dreiser

SCENE—*The kitchen of the Delavan home, one block from the tracks at the outskirts of Marydale. A solid board fence, unpainted, encloses the yard on three sides. In the front, a yellow picket fence with a gate caught by a string. From the gate to the front and rear doors, a moist, brick walk. Outside the kitchen window, vines and hollyhocks. Inside, a breakfast table on which dishes are spread, and at opposite sides of which sit MR. and MRS. DELAVAN.*

TIME—Seven-thirty

JOSEPH DELAVAN

(A short, stout man with brown hair and moustache, and brown-blue eyes, a grocery man by trade—rising and brushing the crumbs from his lap.)

Well, I'll be going. *(He takes down his coat and hat from a hook, and folds up his paper.)* See that the boy don't get out again today.

(He glances toward the front room in an apprehensive, strained way, and goes out, leaving the door open, but carefully fastening the gate behind him.)

MRS. DELAVAN

(A blonde woman of thirty-three, clearing away the breakfast dishes and shaking her head dolefully.)

Ah me! Oh, the day that he was born! It makes all the difference. Things have not been the same since he came—poor little thing that it is! And to think that I should have given birth to it! *(She brushes away the gathering tears with her hand.)* It would be a blessing almost—*(she pauses, terrified by her own thoughts)*—but God forgive me for thinkin' of it! It would be me that would suffer if any harm came to a single hair of its head. *(She wipes her eyes anew.)*

DELAVAN

(Walking out Wood Street to his store, and sighing heavily.)

Dear, dear, dear, dear! That this should have befallen us! *(He sighs again.)* Three years old! Not walking, not talking, and never will! The years! The years! *(He renews his sigh.)*

THE BLUE SPHERE

THE SHADOW

(A soft, girlish figure, entering the Delavan kitchen, trailing clouds of diaphanous drapery, a pale blue sphere in her hands. She looks about, passes through the walls to the front bedroom, where Eddie, THE MONSTROSITY, lies, and bends over the crib.)

Eddie! Eddie! *(She holds up the sphere.)*

THE FAST MAIL

(Passing Ellsworth, one hundred and sixty miles away.)

Ooooooooo-cc! Ooo-cc! O-O!

MRS. DELAVAN

(Laying dishes in the dishpan.)

My, but the flowers smell sweet this morning. *(She pauses to examine the trumpet flowers.)*

THE MONSTROSITY

(A child, with a head almost twice the size of a normal one, opens its large and unnaturally starey eyes, and for the first time perceives the blue sphere.)

Urg-ubbla-da! Blub! Blub! *(It holds out its hands.)*

THE SHADOW

(Smiling winsomely, and waving the sphere to and fro, and revealing the splendor of its clarity.)

See how beautiful it is! How blue, how light!

(It seems to float in her hands like a bubble as she turns it round and round, beckoning the child to follow.)

THE MONSTROSITY

(Its arms still aloft, kicking and crowing horribly.)

Ahda-da! Urg! Ahbublu!

MRS. DELAVAN

(Hearing the sound of its voice, and opening the door.)

It's awake, is it? My little pet. *(She suppresses an almost uncontrollable shudder as she views it.)* I thought I heard you kicking and crowing. Poor little dear! My loving petty lamb! Come now! *(She lifts it up and fondles it on her breast and neck.)* Oh, the poor little sweetheart. Was it having to talk all to itself? Well, mother's been thinking of her pretty baby all the night long. *(To the lad of nine years who appears in the doorway):* Come, Harry. Get your clothes on. I'll want you to go to the store.

(She smooths the great head on her breast with a feeling of anguish.) Sweetie baby! Mother's little lamb. *(She begins to dress it.)*

THE FAST MAIL

(Passing Ultona, one hundred and fifty miles away.)

Oooooo-ee! Oooooo-ee! O-O!

DELANVAN

(Arriving at his store, still thinking.)

It would be so much better if it should die—though I don't suppose I ought to wish it. It's unchristian. *(He unlocks the door and goes in.)*

THE SHADOW

(Before the child and its mother, waving the blue ball.)

See! How wonderful! How lovely! here are yellow and grey and green as I turn it. See the pink here—isn't it lovely? This soft, soft shade of pink! *(She holds the ball close.)*

THE MONSTROSITY

(Staring, interested, allured.)

Ah-da! Eee! Oo-blub!

(It holds out its hands and kicks and struggles. The shadow moves backward, then forward, then backward, then forward, luring the child by the motion.)

MRS. DELAVAN

(Carrying the child to the kitchen.)

Come now, I'll put you down here where mother can see you. That's right. Now here's a nice wooden rattle for baby to play with until mother gets it something to eat. *(She places a red and green rattle in the child's lap. He drops it to gaze at the blue sphere.)* And now here is something for the baby to eat. *(She brings a bowl with a spoon, from which she feeds it, sighing the while. The shadow disappears.)*

MRS. MINTURN

(Looking out of her window at some sweet pea vines and smiling.)

What a perfect day! How nice Mrs. Arthur's trees look! I think—

THE SHADOW

(At her elbow.)

You think you will call on Mrs. Delavan, don't you? She is so lonely!

MRS. MINTURN

(Seemingly continuing her own thoughts.)

I will call on Mrs. Delavan; she is so lonely. I guess I'd better do my house work first, though.

THE BLUE SPHERE

MRS. DELAVAN

(Ceasing to feed the child.)

Now then, will it play with its rattle like a nicey baby, while mama does the front room? *(She passes her hand over her forehead wearily, and turns to her work.)*

THE SHADOW

(Reappearing to the child.)

See how wonderful! How beautiful! It floats and flies as you will float and fly if you come with me. *(She dances the sphere before it.)*

THE MONSTROSITY

Ugh! Blooble!

(It begins to propel itself across the floor toward the door, holding out its hands at times.)

THE SHADOW

(Waving the blue sphere.)

Come! Come!

THE FAST MAIL

(Passing Ungers, one hundred and twenty miles away.)

Ooooo-ee! Ooooo-ee! O-O!

MRS. MINTURN

(Finishing her housework at eleven.)

Now I think I'll go. Mrs. Delavan's life with that child on her hands must be awful! *(She throws a light shawl about her shoulders and steps out.)*

THE SHADOW

(Meeting her at the DELAVAN gate.)

Forget the gate! Forget the gate!

(Unconsciously MRS. MINTURN leaves the gate open.)

MRS. DELAVAN

(The spell of self-absorption broken by the sight of MRS. MINTURN passing the window.)

Eddie! Eddie! Where is he? She hurries to the kitchen and out upon the walk, where she finds him.

(To MRS. MINTURN, without greeting): He always makes for the gate for some reason, and we're so afraid that if he gets out some time he'll get hurt. *(She picks him up and carries him back to the kitchen entrance with grieved thoughts.)* Now, won't you play here, dearie? *(She puts him down.)*

MRS. MINTURN

(A pale, slight woman with partially gray hair.)

It is such a lovely morning I thought I would run over and see how you are getting along. *(To herself)*: What an affliction! Horrible! What a dreadful thing it really is! *(She plunges into an exchange of friendly gossip.)*

THE SHADOW

(Reappearing before the child, the blue sphere in her hands.)

See! How perfect! Green and violet, and this fleck of milky white all toned into one! *(She waves the blue sphere.)*

THE FAST MAIL

(Passing Berham's, eighty miles away.)

Ooooo-ee! Ooooo-ee! O-O!

JOHN GALLOWAY

(The engineer, stout and round, to Petersen, the fireman, slender and sinewy.)

This makes the fifteenth year I've been on this run; fifteen years tomorrow. If somethin' don't happen then it'll be fifteen years without a real, serious, big accident. I guess I'd better tap on wood. *(He smites the small window ledge of his window. The engine takes a great trestle.)*

PETERSEN

(Stopping in his shoveling.)

This makes my fifth. *(The thunder of the wheels on the bridge drowns most of the sound, and the wind blows the rest away.)*

DELAVAN

(Approaching the house at twelve-fifteen, a block distant.)

Well, if the gate isn't open and Eddie on the sidewalk! Ella ought to keep a better lookout than that. *(He hurries forward.)* It's bad enough to have a child in this state, but to have it crawling all over the neighborhood. *(He stoops to pick it up.)*

THE SHADOW

(The blue sphere in her hands.)

Forget the gate! Forget the gate! *(Passing her hand before his eyes.)*
(He enters the gate, leaving it open, but returns after a little to close it.)

MRS. DELAVAN

(Appearing at the door, distressed and ashamed.)

Eddie! He has crawled out again! Why, he was right here only a

moment ago. Where did you find him? (*She makes room for Mrs. MINTURN, who comes forward to make her departure.*)

DE LAVAN

(*With suppressed irritation.*)

Outside the gate. He was half way down the street here. The gate was wide open.

MRS. MINTURN

(*Apologetically, sorry for Mrs. DELAVAN.*)

I may have left it open, though I thought I closed it. I must be going now. I'm sorry. I know how it is with children. They love to crawl. (*She greets Mr. DELAVAN.*)

DE LAVAN

(*To Mrs. DELAVAN, after Mrs. MINTURN had gone.*)

Something is sure to happen one of these days if you don't keep that gate closed. It's bad enough as it is, seems to me, without making a spectacle of us, I—

MRS. DELAVAN

(*Wiping her eyes.*)

There you go. As though I didn't have a hundred things to think of besides watching him. Heaven knows, I don't want him to get away any more than you do, but he seems possessed to do it. I didn't leave the gate open. Mrs. Minturn called a little while ago—

DE LAVAN

(*Sympathetically.*)

I know you've got a lot to do. I'm just ashamed to have him crawling around that way. (*He pats her shoulder.*)

THE MAILMAN

(*Whistling and calling "DE LAVAN!" hands in a letter.*)

THE SHADOW

(*As he goes out the gate.*)

Forget the gate! Forget the gate! (*He goes off, leaving it open.*)

THE FAST MAIL

(*Passing Ellwood, sixty miles away.*)

Ooooo-ee! Oooo-ee! O-O-O!

THE SHADOW

(*To the child, who is just inside the door.*) Grey! Green! Blue! Brown! See how smooth, how glistening, how round! (*She coaxes him with the sphere, waving it before her. The child begins to crawl.*)

DELAVAN

(*To his wife, who is putting food on the table.*)

Mrs. MacMichaels was in this morning. She wanted me to give her more credit. But with that husband of hers I couldn't. I told her if she would pay half the old bill—but she can't, of course. I don't see why I should be called upon to trust them. (*He eats rapidly.*)

MRS. DELAVAN

(*Forgetful of the MONSTROSITY for a moment.*)

Nor I. I know it's too bad, and I'm sorry for her, but I don't see that you should be called upon to do it. I wonder what's keeping Harry so long? (*She goes to the door.*)

THE SHADOW

(*Before the child outside, waving the sphere in sinuous lines.*)

Thus and so, right and left, round and round.

(*The child rocks its head in time with the motion.*)

DELAVAN

(*Chancing to glance at the child and deeming the motion to be the result of idiocy.*)

Tct! Tct! Tct! It's too bad. (*He hides his distress behind a grave face.*)

MRS. DELAVAN

(*Returning from the door.*)

I don't see him. (*She seats herself. They eat in silence.*)

THE SHADOW

(*The child following her.*)

Round and round, round and round. Pale grey! Pale blue; Dark blue! Light! Light! Dark! Light! Dark! (*The child crawls eagerly after.*)

HARRY

(*Entering a few moments later with Eddie in his arms.*)

Somebody's left the gate open again. The kid was right near it. Say, if we don't keep it closed he'll get out some day and right down on the tracks. He was just scramblin' along.

THE BLUE SPHERE

MRS. DELAVAN

(Wearily.)

Now, who could have done that! It must have been the mailman. *(She puts the child beside her on the floor.)* I think I'll have to tie a string around him. He's getting awfully restless these days. I never saw anything like it. *(She contemplates the years of misery and discomfort and distress which he represents, but reproaches herself for it all at the same time.)* I don't know whatever I am to do with him. I can't lock him up in a room all day all by himself. *(She closes the door.)*

DELAVAN

That makes it pretty hot in here, doesn't it?

THE SHADOW

(Hovering over the child.) To hold this would be so wonderful—see round, blue, glistening! *(She waves it rhythmically. The child follows it with his eyes.)*

THE FAST MAIL

(Passing Wheatlands, forty-five miles away.)

Ooooo-cc! Ooooo-cc! O-O-O!

GALLOWAY

(The engineer, wiping the dust out of the corners of his eyes and turning to PETERSEN.)

Remember that cow we killed at Ellwood two years ago?

PETERSEN

(Shoveling coal at his feet.)

Yay-o.

GALLOWAY

(Proudly.)

They collected sixty dollars for that—so I understand. Utterson was telling me here a few days ago. *(He sticks his head out of a window and surveys the elbow of a stream that comes into view, then withdraws it.)* I never saw a cow tossed clean up in the air before. Her tail stood out as straight as a stick. *(He smiles and whistles for a crossing.)*

DELAVAN

(Arising and shaking off the crumbs.)

Well, I'd better be going now, I guess. *(He takes down his hat and coat.)*

I don't see why he shouldn't play in the yard if we can keep the gate shut. (*He goes out.*)

HARRY

(*Fifteen minutes later, banging around his mother's skirt.*)

Ma, I promised to pitch at a ball game at two o'clock. Can I go?

HIS MOTHER

(*Wearily, but sympathetically.*)

If you'll promise me faithfully to be back at five. You know what your father told you the other day. You ought to really stay here and help me mind the baby. (*He takes his cap and goes.*)

THE SHADOW

(*Moving before him to the gate.*)

Forget the gate! Forget the gate!

(*He goes out, leaving the gate open.*)

THE FAST MAIL

(*Passing Hunterstown, thirty-five miles away.*)

Oooo-cc! Ooooo-cc! OO! OOO!

MRS. DELAVAN

(*Entering the front room for a moment.*)

And now I have that mending to do. And those pies. I think I'll do the mending first—no; I'll make the pies first. (*She returns to the kitchen.*)

THE SHADOW

(*Retreating before her.*)

I'll watch the child! Forget him! Forget him!

(*MRS. DELAVAN commences paring apples, all thought of the child escaping her.*)

THE SHADOW

(*Before the baby on the walk.*)

Come!

(*THE MONSTROSITY crawls eagerly after.*)

THE FAST MAIL

(*Passing Palmer's Station, fifteen miles away.*)

Ooooo-cc! Ooooo-cc! O! O! O!

GALLOWAY

Didjy see where Esposito got thirty days for that last shindig of his?

THE BLUE SPHERE

PETERSEN

(Manifesting a proper interest.)

No! You don't say! When did that happen?

GALLOWAY

(Loftily.)

Oh, last Monday. He come around the roundhouse, talking his usual guff, and they just took an' locked him up. It's thirty days for him now.

PETERSEN

(Reverently and righteously.)

An' it serves him good and right, I say.

GALLOWAY

That's what I say, too. These dago wipers! What good are they?

(He blows for another crossing.)

MRS. DELAVAN

(Paring in her kitchen.)

These apples are not as good as bell-flowers for pies, but they'll do.

(She casts cores and peelings away, mixes flour and rolls her dough.)

THE SHADOW

(Half way down the street to the track, the child following.)

Such a pretty color. Blue! Blue as your mother's eyes! See how the light touches it here. See how clear it is. If you had this in your hands you would be happy, happy, happy!

(The child crawls, his eyes fixed on it.)

MRS. DELAVAN

(Spreading the dough for the third pie.)

This dough is really softer than it ought to be.

(She sprinkles a little flour on it.)

THE SHADOW

(Holding a pink-flowered dress before her eyes.)

Do you remember this?

MRS. DELAVAN

(A vision of the church door at Clarendon, a small town thirty miles away, and of herself entering it in this very dress, and Nate Saulsby passing her and looking at her admiringly.)

That was such a pretty dress. It had such nice frilled collars and cuffs. I wonder how Nate is doing now. He was a nice, handsome, clever boy.

(Shadows of other girls and boys troop by—bits of crowds, country roads, country squares, a panorama of half-forgotten faces and places.)

THE SHADOW

(As MRS. DELAVAN dreams and the child crawls.)

This ball is so perfect that if you had it you would be happy for ever and ever. It is perpetual joy, the color of peace. No need to seek for happiness elsewhere. Follow this—but take it from my hands, you will be happy. See—

(She waves it near, then far, then near, then far.)

THE MONSTROSITY

Ooogh! Bubblum—

THE FAST MAIL

(Passing Rutland, five miles away.)

Ooooo-ee! Ooooo-ee! O—! O—! O—!

THE SHADOW

Just a little farther! Soon you will have it now. Soon I will give it to you. When we reach the corner, when we get there where the steel rails shine—I will give it to you. Isn't it perfect! Isn't it blue! See how the light falls through it—clear as water.

(She trips gaily backward, waving the sphere before her from side to side.)

THE FAST MAIL

(Entering the environs of Marydale, a mile away.)

Ooooo-ee! Ooooo-ee! O—O—O!

THE SHADOW

(Hovering above the tracks a few feet in front of the child.)

See, when you get here, right here, I will give it to you. The beautiful ball! The beautiful sphere! This you are to have when you get here—here! You will be so happy.

(She coaxes, smiles and pleads. THE MONSTROSITY follows.)

PETERSEN

(To GALLOWAY, as they rush into Marydale, the bell ringing.)

I see they haven't started on that siding yet here. They were to begin yesterday, so Jay Cox says.

GALLOWAY

(On his seat by the window, a look of serene content on his face.)

So I see. They couldn't get done at Linden, I suppose. *(He shifts his position for comfort and prepares to maintain silence as the train rounds a curve and the Wood Street crossing comes into view. Noting a wagon waiting at a minor crossing, he adds):* They ought to put a gate or two more in this town. They need them. *(He blows the whistle.)*

THE SHADOW

(Hovering above THE MONSTROSITY, the blue sphere in her hand.)

Just a little farther, baby. Only a little more, and then—

(The child crawls out on the tracks as the engine rounds the curve, eight hundred feet away.)

GALLOWAY

(Stiffening.)

By God! I believe that's a child on the track! Shake down the sand, will you? It is, as I live. Oh, Jesus!

(He reverses the lever and throws on the air brakes.)

PETERSEN

(Leaping to the sand box.)

Can't you stop her?

GALLOWAY

(As the engine grinds and clanks, a frozen grip on the throttle.)

No, by God! It's too late!

(The engine strikes.)

THE SHADOW

(Tossing the blue ball in the air.)

There, my sweet, it is yours!

(The ball falls into the child's hands.)

MRS. DELAVAN

(Hearing the whistle and shaking off her dreams.)

The express! The baby! Good gracious! Where is the child? *(She runs to the door, the gate, the street.)* Eddie! Eddie! Where is he, anyway? *(She notes the train grinding to a stop at the corner and runs in that direction. A cold trembling seizes upon her.)*

GALLOWAY

(Holding the air brake in a cutting grip, his face drawn and yellow.)

I saw its face! I saw its face! I tell you! A beautiful child! I can never forgive myself for this. Just a little baby, too. Not more than two or three years old.

(He drops down as the train stops and runs back—joined by the conductor, trainmen and passengers. A large crowd, gesticulating and exclaiming, gathers.)

A SCORE OF PASSENGERS

How dreadful, How terrible! What a pity!

(Several women faint.)

GALLOWAY

(Explaining.)

I didn't see it until it was right on. I have three little ones of my own.

MRS. DELAVAN

(Frantically making her way forward and falling on her knees.)

My Eddie! My Eddie!

(She screams hysterically and faints.)

THE SHADOW

(Appearing to the bereft mother as she weeps over the broken body.)

It is here, it is here, don't you see!

(The baby, holding the blue sphere, appears to the mother's eyes.)

THE CONDUCTOR

(To a passenger, as the train moves slowly and then a little faster.)

Well, it's a God's blessing if a child had to be killed it was a deformed one, anyway.

THE PASSENGER

You're right there.

GALLOWAY

(A heavy, weary look on his face.)

And I thought I was looking! The first child I ever killed in my fifteen years.

THE DEATH OF SIR LAUNCELOT

by Edgar Lee Masters

Sir Launcelot had fled to France
For the peace of Guinevere;
And many a noble knight was slain,
And Arthur lay on his bier.

Sir Launcelot took ship from France
And sailed across the sea.
He rode seven days through fair England
Till he came to Almesbury.

Then spake Sir Bors to Launcelot:
The old time is at end;
Ye have no more in England's realm
In east nor west a friend.

Ye have no friend in all England
Sith Mordred's war hath been,
And Queen Guinevere became a nun
To heal her soul of sin

Sir Launcelot answered never a word
But rode to the west countree,
Until through the forest he saw a light
That shone from a nunnery.

Sir Launcelot entered the cloister,
And the queen fell down in a swoon.
Oh blessed Jesu, saith the queen,
For thy mother's love, a boon!

Go hence Sir Launcelot, saith the queen,
And let me win God's grace.
My heavy heart serves me no more
To look upon thy face.

Through ye was wrought King Arthur's death,
Through ye great war and wrake.
Leave me alone, and let me bleed,
Pass by for Jesu's sake!

Then fare ye well, saith Launcelot,
Sweet madam, fare ye well.
And sythen ye have left the world
No more in the world I dwell.

Then up rose sad Sir Launcelot
And rode by wold and mere
Until he came to a hermitage
Where bode Sir Beldivere.

And there he put a habit on,
And there did pray and fast.
And when Sir Beldivere told him all
His heart for sorrow brast!

How that Sir Mordred, traitorous knight,
Betrayed his King and Sire;
And how King Arthur, wounded, died
Broken in heart's desire.

And so Sir Launcelot penance made,
And worked at servile toil;
And prayed the Bishop of Canterbury
His sins for to assoil.

His shield went clattering on the wall
To a dolorous wail of wind.
His casque was rust, his mantle dust
With spider webs entwined.

His listless horses left alone
Went cropping where they would,
To see the noblest knight of the world
Upon his sorrow brood.

Anon a vision came in his sleep,
And thrice the Vision saith:
Go thou to Almesbury for thy sin,
Where lieth the queen in death.

Sir Launcelot cometh to Almesbury
And knelt by the dead queen's bier:
Oh none may know, moaned Launcelot,
What sorrow lieth here.

What love, what honor, what defeat,
What hope of the Holy Grail.
The moon looked through the latticed glass
On the queen's face cold and pale.

Sir Launcelot kissed the cered cloth,
And none could stay his woe,
Her hair lay back from the oval brow,
And her nose was clear as snow.

They wrapped her body in cloth of Raines
They put her in webs of lead.
They confined her in white marble,
And sang a mass for the dead.

Sir Launcelot and seven knights
Bore torches around the bier.
They scattered myrrh and frankincense
On the corpse of Guinevere.

They put her in earth by King Arthur
To the chant of a doleful tune.
They heaped the earth on Guinevere
And Launcelot fell in a swoon.

Sir Launcelot went to the hermitage
Some Grace of God to find;
But never he ate, and never he drank
And there he sickened and dwined.

Sir Launcelot lay in a painful bed,
And spake with a dreary steven:
Sir Bishop, I prayed you shrive my soul
And make it clean for heaven.

The Bishop houseled Sir Launcelot,
The Bishop kept watch and ward.
Bury me, saith Sir Launcelot,
In the earth of Joyous Guard.

Three candles burned the whole night through
Till the red dawn looked in the room.
And the white, white soul of Launcelot
Strove with a black, black doom.

I see the old witch Dame Brisen,
And Elaine so straight and tall—
Nay, saith the Bishop of Canterbury,
The shadows dance on the wall.

I see long hands of dead women.
They clutch for my soul eftsoon;
Nay saith the Bishop of Canterbury
'Tis the drifting light of the moon.

I see three angels, saith he,
Before a silver urn.
Nay, saith the Bishop of Canterbury,
The candles do but burn.

I see a cloth of red samite
O'er the holy vessels spread.
Nay, saith the Bishop of Canterbury
The great dawn groweth red.

I see all the torches of the world
Shine in the room so clear.
Nay, saith the Bishop of Canterbury,
The white dawn draweth near.

Sweet lady, I behold the face
Of thy dear Son, our Lord,
Nay, saith the Bishop of Canterbury,
The sun shines on your sword.

Sir Galahad outstretcheth hands
And takes me ere I fail,—
Sir Launcelot's body lay in death,
As his soul found the Holy Grail.

They laid his body in the quire
Upon a purple pall.
He was the meekest, gentlest knight
That ever ate in hall.

He was the kindest, goodliest knight
That ever England roved,
The truest lover of sinful man
That ever woman loved.

I pray you all, fair gentlemen,
Pray for his soul and mine.
He lived to lose the heart he loved
And drink but bitter wine.

He wrought a woe he knew not of,
He failed his fondest quest
Now sing a psalter, read a prayer
May all souls find their rest.—AMEN

JUST HIM AND HER

by Ruth Suckow*

I

"WHO lives in that little house at the edge of town across from the cemetery?"

"Oh, that's where the Lew Daveys live."

"Just the old folks?"

"Yes. Just him and her."

* * *

This was one of the oldest houses in Plum Branch.

It stood close to the ground and leaned forward a little. It was of a gray, aged, indeterminate color. It had small-paned windows that gave out a saddish light. The porch floor sloped toward the ground and was broken at the edges. The posts were thin with an insert of lattice-work. An old buggy seat stood on the porch. No one but an old couple would be living in such a house.

There was a gray picket fence around the lawn, but not around the garden that sloped south to the straggling grassy road that went only as far as the hilly pasture across from the house. Lilac bushes grew so close to this fence that the leaves pushed between the pickets. There was no gate, but a scraggly cedar tree on each side the opening like a gate post. A clump of tall pines grew in one corner of the lawn, and, underneath, a mass of bluebells standing like a pool of blue water. There were flowering bushes close to the house wall and a lily-of-the-valley bed near the porch, in a corner. In the backyard stood plum trees with smoke-black branches strangely wind-blown and now a delicate froth of greenish-white bloom.

The house was on the outskirts of town. A red-brown clay road went past it and died out in a few grassy wagon tracks at the fence of Glissendorf's pasture. The Plum Branch cemetery was up this road a little way. The white tombstones were set thick among blackish evergreens where birds were always busy. Just across from the house, a hill pasture rose in an emerald-green mound. It was sprinkled with buttercups. A little brown path was cut around it. A wooden gate fastened with an

* Miss Suckow was a *Smart Set* "discovery" and most of her early work was printed in that magazine. Her latest full-length novel is *The Folks*. She is from Iowa.

old wire gave entrance. A reddish-colored dilapidated wagon stood in the grass at the foot of the hill. Plum Branch, the creek, was beyond the hill in a limestone gully.

II

The Lew Daveys had come to Plum Branch among the early settlers; but now not many people seemed to know them. They were retired farmers. Mr. Davey had a team and did a little hauling and his own gardening. He still owned a farm west of town. They lived on the rent—on a little of it. Most of it they saved.

Some of the ladies in the Congregational church—Mrs. Sperry, Mrs. Kuehnle, Edie Robbins—always took pains to think of Mrs. Davey, to ask her to missionary meetings and to solicit her for church suppers, to speak to her at church. But she went out very little.

They both did go to church, however, every Sunday morning, and sat at the side in the fifth row from the front. People sometimes asked who that old couple were who always sat in the fifth row. "He" was short and stocky, but now he began to look very frail—hollowed out between the big bones. He had a short rough beard. "She" had a grayish sad indeterminate face like the face of her house. She wore an old dark blue suit with gathered sleeves, a small black hat with a bunch of black ribbon at the side, and gray cotton gloves.

They never made much response when the minister shook hands with them after church. They never seemed to make much response to anything. There was a kind of emptiness in their faces—yet not stupidity. As if they had lived on so long without exactly meaning to, and couldn't make much of it. In church, their gnarled, misshapen hands, with the skin stretched tight over the knuckle bones and hollow and wrinkled between, lay with a kind of mournful patience in their laps. They had worked hard all their lives. Now there was no need.

The air of their house was clean, and yet there was something mouldy about it. The rooms were scrubbed, but that could not lighten the dark, old-fashioned look of the brown-painted woodwork and cupboards and the dark-gray rag rugs with threads of red. Everything was aired religiously, but there could be no freshness in the look of the orange plush on the parlor chairs and settee, the brown-and-red calico cushion on the lounge, the red-checkered table cloth, the little old ornaments and pictures in walnut or silvered frames, the dark wall paper. The plants, too, growing in tin cans wrapped in crêpe paper—

the geraniums, the ferns, the cactus, the dark-red foliage, the red lilies.

It was strange to step into this house in its out-of-the-way setting and sense the old left-over life lingering on in it.

It seemed as if they must always have been living in this house, but really it was not so long. When the children were gone they had stayed on at the farm for a few years and then rented it and moved into town, as most farmers did. They said they were getting along and it was time to take some comfort in life.

Their farm was out on the Sand Spring road just off the highway—a grayish, rain-stained house like this, shaded with bushes, with fowls straggling over the yard and the needle-matted ground under the grove of evergreens. It had never been a rich farm, but they had made "enough."

They had had a big family. The pictures of all the children were in the blue, plush-covered album with the steel clasps on the center-table.

The one of Levi, the oldest, was a wedding picture. It had been taken at the old photographer's in Adamsville, where all the wedding couples used to go. It had a background of blurry trees done in charcoal work on a big screen, and in front of this the bride was sitting on an artificial stump, with the groom standing beside her. The bride was one of the Liebes. She had a broad German face with a fringe of light hair straight across it, and she wore a white basque strained tightly across her big breast and hips. Levi had curly hair and a curly mustache and a sour, dubious look. They had moved out to Nebraska and Levi had died of cancer of the stomach. "She" had married again.

The next two children, Edwin and Lily, had died in infancy. They had no pictures—only two black memorial cards with their names and dates and verses of Scripture, with two doves bearing open Bibles, in gold. They were buried out in the little Sand Spring cemetery, hardly used any more, where the old slabs of white were now toppling over the sunken, grass-covered mounds under the sad-creaking evergreens.

Luella, the oldest girl, now lived in Diagonal, in the southern part of the state. Her husband had a vulcanizing works. In her picture she had a slight wildflower prettiness—small features under frizzled bangs—but she was now scrawny, overworked, bitter-tongued, with a great brood of children and "nothing to do with." She wrote home occasionally on scraps of yellowish scratch paper torn from the children's tablets, and sometimes the old lady made little nightgowns for the youngest of the children.

Sam, the next boy, was a farmer. He did not write, but sometimes he brought his whole family in the car and stopped over for Sunday dinner.

Achsia, the favorite daughter—they always called her Axie—lived close by in Adamsville, the county seat. Her mother used to go often to see her, but now she seldom did. She said she was getting so she hated to go places. Axie still wrote, and the children wrote. Axie was fat and dark, rather pop-eyed. She had a good, sentimental heart and had always been kind to the old folks.

John had died of tuberculosis when he was twenty-seven. In the picture it could be seen that he was of a more delicate mould than the others—his nose thin, temples slightly hollowed, thoughtful eyes. There was a ghastly enlarged picture of him in a silvered frame on the parlor wall with all the life retouched out of it. His tombstone in the family lot could be seen just beyond the Soldiers' Monument in the cemetery.

Walter had gone West and had a fruit farm now in Oregon. They seldom heard from him. Or from Barney, who had not turned out well, and was still unsettled—going to a place and then tearing up and leaving almost as soon as he got there. The last they had heard of him he had been working at the docks in New Orleans. He was separated from his wife, whom the old people had never seen.

These were all that were left to them.

They knew a few old people around town, but not well. They had never had time to get acquainted with folks. Sometimes "she" drove out into the country to see the Old Lady Finley, who was living with her daughter. "He" went down to the store occasionally and hung around with the other old fellows who sat on the bench under the awning until the sun got around that way.

They still got up at five or half-past every morning. "He" started the fire in the cook stove and "she" made the breakfast of fried eggs or buckwheat cakes that was just what they had always had. They ate at the kitchen table, silently, the old man bent over the table and shoveling in his food, the old lady jumping up to wait on him as in the old days when she had had the men to feed.

Then he went out to hoe a little in the garden. You could see his bowed, gnarly figure in the faded shirt and overalls, moving slowly, with a strange sad significance, over the soft earth-brown of the plowed field—the green pastures beyond, and the blossoming plum trees that scented the May air.

But he couldn't do much any more. He had tried to trim up the plum trees this spring, but had suddenly grown dizzy up there where the thin, black branches criss-crossed against the blue sky, and had almost "had a fall."

He was not even going to do hauling this spring. He liked to feed the two big horses in the barn that smelled of hay and manure. All the stock he had now, and he had always been good to his stock. The horses were fed up so, the men in town said, that they were too lazy to pull a load.

Then there were errands "she" could send him on downtown. He did most of the trading and still handled all the money. "She" was careful how she used up stamps and crochet cotton, for she hated to ask him for more. Their money lay in the Plum Branch Bank, ready to be distributed among the children when they were gone.

The old man was not unhappy working out in his garden. He liked the smell of the soil. But it was so small, so no account, after the farm. He had a feeling of being lost, somehow, "let down."

"She" was better off. Her work had never seemed to count for as much as his. It had not brought in the money. But it had lasted better. It fitted into the new place. She still had a house to look after, and time to do it right at last. She did everything herself—washing, ironing, baking, cleaning, sewing.

And then there were her plants. She had always been a great hand for plants, but had never had much time for them on the farm. She had red foliage plants and cactus and red King lilies. She tended the plants in the afternoon when all the housework was "done up" and no one could reproach her.

Then she did crocheting and knitting, although her eyes were giving out. Now she was working on a crocheted filet yoke for Axie's Marguerite's graduating clothes. She always had some work in hand in the flowered silk bag that Marguerite had made for her.

Still, this was not much after her work with that big family—every minute full. Sometimes when she sat down to her fancy work, quite contentedly, in the afternoon, a feeling of guilt would come over her. It would seem as if there were something she ought to be doing. Then she too would feel lost, sitting there in her little cane-seated rocker by the dining-room window, looking out beyond the pines to the white stones in the cemetery.

The children—all gone. None of them needed her any more. None of them had seemed to need her very long. Except John. He had needed

her. He used to sit in the big rocker by the west window in the farm house, reading the magazines that the minister brought out to him. He used to call for her when she was out on the place at work. She felt closer now to John, in his lone grave in the cemetery just down the road a little way, than to the others. There was something she still could do for John. She could care for his grave, plant it with pansies, put on it her choicest flowers. She took a kind of strange, sad pride in its order and beauty.

She had never had much time to give to the children when they were small. As soon as they were grown they had married and left her. Each other was all these two had left.

III

They did not talk much. They never had. When they did, it was in a dry, faintly sarcastic tone. They would have been ashamed to show affection. They would not have thought it becoming in old folks.

Besides, what they felt was not affection. It was a feeling of belonging.

The only things on earth to which they were still of use were each other. To each other, they were not left over, and lingering on. "He" locked the doors and made all safe as he had always done. "He" tinkered around and made things a little handier for her. "He" went for the mail and brought in the milk and got her medicine for her at the doctors. "She" mended his clothes and kept him tidy, saw to his comfort, cooked the food that he could eat. Each felt a kind of deep, unspoken reliance on the other, and their age that was setting them apart from everything else was pulling them together. No one else knew what they had been through. No one else understood.

In these spring evenings, "she" sat out on the buggy seat on the porch and "he" on the step below her, staring ahead of them—at the line of the green hill pasture against the sky, at the unused road beyond the fence. "He" might say—"Corn's goin' in late this year"—or "she"—"Who's that I see going into the cemetery just now? Looked like it might be Haller's folks." The sky deepened to cool dark blue; a little moon hung over the plum trees. The thick green grass was wet; sent up a fresh night odor. The old wagon stood sad, forlorn, at the foot of the hill. "Well, might's well go to bed—I s'pose. D'you put the hoe in the barn?"—

They got up and went into the warm, dark house, lit a lamp in the

small downstairs bedroom, undressed, climbed into the old pine bedstead. Neither would have thought of going without the other, somehow.

The pale light from the window that they never opened until June silvered their thin, hollow faces and lay like frost on their hair.

But they were feeble now. The life was running out. Axie said she had them on her mind. She even wrote a letter to Sam about them in her childish, sentimental hand without any capital letters. She kept meaning to run over to Plum Branch. But somehow she never got there.

The minister could see it when he went to call. He was glad to meet George Horton on the street so that he could say what was in his mind—"I went over to the Lew Daveys' this afternoon. You know, they're getting pretty feeble. I'm afraid the old man won't last much longer."

They knew it themselves in a kind of way. They gave up one thing after another—going to church, trips to town. When they sat, a kind of silence seemed to muffle them in.

But it was the old lady who went first. Before the bluebells were gone, before she could see how many plums there would be on the trees that year, before the yellow and purple pansies were out on the lot in the cemetery. She was sick only a few days. Axie was there. The man wandered about the place, stood in the barn, sat out on the old buggy seat. She was unconscious most of the time. But just at the last she seemed to give him a look—full of a kind of mute, intense meaning.

The old man seemed to "take it" better than they had feared. He was quiet and docile; he hardly spoke. He let Axie lead him about at the funeral, washed and brushed, in his best black clothes.

"I don't know as Pa ever seemed to make over her much," Axie said to Sam, "but he'll miss her just the same."

Afterward they looked about the place for him and finally found him sitting out on the cistern by the side wall where some white violets grew. He did not seem to be grieving—only sitting with his hands on his knees. They felt relieved; they could hardly have said why.

Axie put her arms around him. "Come on into the house with us, don't you want to, Pa?"

He let her lead him in. They went into the dining-room, that seemed pitiful and useless now. Axie sat down on the lounge beside him and took his hand. Sam went creaking solemnly up to the rocker.

"Pa, I'm going to stay with you tonight," Axie said, "and until

I've got things all looked after. But after that I got to go back. I got the children, you know. Don't you want to come back with me, Pa?"

She stroked his hand. Sam did not dare to look at them—he stared at an old faded photograph of the farm that hung behind the stove.

"Why, yes," the old man said vacantly. "I guess I might do that."

"I'd love to have you, Pa," Axie's voice shook with relief. "Just think how the children will like it." She kissed his hand. He did not notice her.

"Well," Sam said, rising, "I suppose me and the missus had better be starting if we're going to get back. Goodbye, Pa." He shook hands awkwardly.

"Goodbye. Goodbye."

The old man went to bed when Axie told him to that night. The next day he was just the same. He went about the place, stood a little while here and a little while there, sat out on the cistern again. There was a vacancy in his eyes. He did not seem to be thinking or feeling much.

The next day at twilight Axie went into the dining-room to speak to him. He was not there—but she could see him in the parlor, in the plush chair by the window, a queer place for him to sit. But there was a stillness—she knew before she called out "Pa!" and went up to him, that he was gone.

"Just like that," she told her husband tearfully. "I left him while I went out to the kitchen, and when I came back he was already gone!"

* * *

People in Plum Branch had not thought very much about it when the old lady died. They had only said, "I hear the Old Lady Davey died this morning." But they talked of the old man's death, the women in their houses, the men in the Post Office and the depot and the store.

"Yes, sir, that was a queer thing. There didn't seem to be anything special the matter with him—no sickness, you could say. It just seemed as if when *she* went *he* wanted to go, too. Couldn't keep on without her. Didn't know what to do with himself, they'd been together so long. I've known of other old couples like that."

SLAPDASHER THE ARTIST

by Felix Riesenber

EVERYONE will agree that I was to be pitied in the lean days before the sleepy orbit of my existence was suddenly changed and I became a shining satellite in the train of that supreme genius Slapdasher. But what could I expect, trying as I was to fit the methods of a bygone age to the rapid exigencies of modern life?

I am, or I should perhaps say I was, an artist before I became associated with my genial benefactor Martin Slapdasher. My low collar, my soft black hat, my baggy trousers, not to mention the long streamer of crape that served me as a necktie, all proclaimed me the regulation dauber of paint. Things certainly were different in those sleepy days before the great Slapdasher had burst upon the astonished world in showers of brilliant paint. At the time I mention not a soul was left me to rub against another, and I was indeed in a bad way. At the exhibit of the American artists, my canvas entitled "Impresario" had remained unsold, and believe me or not, I had worked a full year upon this large painting. However, this as well as the inferior work of others seemed to attract no intelligent attention from the large crush of fashionable women who found time to attend the opening reception of the exhibit. The men, if they looked at any of the pictures at all, seemed only to do so when the expanse of gold frame was so great as literally to challenge their imagination if not their admiration for the acres of stretched canvas coated with gaudy pigments by solitary workers such as I. The only time that the paintings were really admired was on the free days, but of course none of them was ever sold.

It was shortly after this exhibit that I met my former schoolmate Martin Slapdasher. Our paths had long since diverged, and while I had at times read of some brilliant operation of his in the larger field of business, he, other than remembering that I had gone to Paris to study art, had lost all track of me. Slapdasher however greeted me warmly, and grasping me by the arm led the way to a nearby place of refreshment. He then insisted, when something comforting had been placed before us, that I tell him the story of my life since the day we parted at the door of the little red schoolhouse.

When my tale had been told, Slapdasher, big and successful, spoke sagely to me, shabby and discouraged. "Seneca," said he, "your story

interests me greatly, both on account of the view it has given me of the present wayback methods of the average unsuccessful artist, but because it also proves to me that the great multiplication of modern conveniences has added so many more functions to the ordinary course of the so-called civilized life that the man of means has no longer the necessary time nor inclination to appreciate or enjoy a work of art. His gallery was stocked years ago by his grandfather, or if he is of the selfmade type and desires a number of paintings, his art broker supplies them from the large expensive stock already on hand. Furthermore, with the advance in fireproof construction of buildings where paintings are liable to be stored, we see that the chance of a conflagration helpful to artists is exceedingly rare.

"Of course, my dear Seneca," he went on, seeing how shocked I was, "you will declare that art can never die, which is true enough. There is nothing the matter with art itself; the fault lies with the antiquated and expensive way in which it attempts to perpetuate itself. Those whose social and business engagements still leave them sufficient time to cultivate a taste for art are as you know far too poor to purchase a painting that takes a year to make."

I saw nothing cheering in the prospect held forth to me by Slapdasher, though he continued smiling as though the whole thing was a huge joke. Suddenly a dark thought assailed me. He was jesting with me in my distress! My blood boiled; I became purple with indignation and would have spoken, had not Slapdasher at that moment motioned to the waiter to fill our glasses again. However I misjudged the good fellow, and for that momentary doubt I have since breathed many a prayer of forgiveness.

"What would you advise me to do?" I finally asked, for his disgusting cheerfulness seemed unbounded, and I saw no harm in being agreeable to a man who insisted upon paying for the drinks.

"Merely this," he began, blowing a wreath of smoke very deliberately and pronouncing his words with an air of calm conviction, "co-operate. Coöperation is the salvation of the present age. Formerly people were compelled to feed and clothe those who worked for them, which was bad enough, and later on they were compelled to pay them, which was worse; but now they merely coöperate with them and have their work done for nothing.

"What you should do, my dear Seneca, is to apply this ultra-modern conception of the coöperative idea to the hopelessly antiquated business

of the artist. In other words, you should coöperate with a dozen or so of your fellow artists, and by conducting your affairs in a scientific manner lift yourself out of this awful slough of despair and take your rightful place in the world."

How the noble Slapdasher then took hold of me, and how he organized the great enterprise that has since made me rich and has lifted the name of Martin Slapdasher high among the modern masters would take too long to describe in detail; all I can venture is the briefest sketch. That he was undoubtedly right in his diagnosis of the condition of modern art events fully proved, though I doubt not that had I partaken of less liquid refreshment I would have rejected his scheme with fine scorn and be as poor today as I was on that memorable evening when, hanging on Slapdasher's arm, I walked forth unsteadily beneath the gay lights of the café.

The next day we organized the Quartier Latin Society of Coöperative Artists—a society that was destined to revolutionize the art products output of the world, and soon had hung its paintings in the front parlor of every farmhouse in the land.

First we got little Jimmy Le Febvre, whose sky and cloud effects—he had once been up in a balloon in Paris—were the admiration of all beholders, though his figures and landscapes were as stiff as the toy soldiers and farms that we see in the shops at Christmas time. Then came Doujon, who, while good at foreground and color work, was a stick at doing anything more than ten feet away from his canvas. These two misfires, who after years of artistic loading had failed ever to go off, were saved from starvation by the genius of Slapdasher, and formed the nucleus of our coöperative society. Slapdasher secured a large factory building with a good northern exposure, and here we soon had installed a populous society of painters, all specialists in some particular form of the art. Tommy Jones, of Sedalia, Missouri, who had studied with me at the Beaux Arts, worked from eight to six steadily, with an hour off for lunch, painting in backgrounds. Dick Geldar spent his days splashing in his peculiar martial effects of soldiers and savages in action, working regularly on all our war pictures. George Blomb took the canvasses from Geldar's hands and put on his inimitable Verestchagin atmosphere, for which he once almost had a picture hung in the Salon, had it not been so hopelessly out of drawing. The paintings then went to Jimmy Le Febvre for the sky, and finally Doujon would touch up the foreground, which adds so much to the interest of a work of art.

In this manner we developed combinations of artists, all good beyond dispute in their various ways, and the final result was a series of such masterpieces as had never been given to the world before. In my enthusiasm at this remarkable success, I was for charging a good round sum for the paintings, but here Slapdasher proved his wisdom again by opposing me.

"Business today," he said, "is built up on a system of small profits and large sales, and this art factory of ours is an up-to-the-minute, sweat-'em-out manufacturing concern." Which of course was so, and I wisely yielded to him in the matter.

Being a truly coöperative society, we got along with the greatest harmony, and our membership was constantly augmented by the joining of men in all the varied branches of the business. Daily I sat at my desk in my private office dictating to my stenographers. The foreman of each gang—or I should say group, though Slapdasher always used the former term in referring to our combinations of artists—would come to my office at eight o'clock to get his orders for the day. Usually they would read something like this:

LANDSCAPE GROUP No. 4, Van Twiller, foreman.

SPECIFICATIONS

Oil painting No. 37,453. Order No. 538,249.

Title—Scene on the Classic Harlem.

JONES—Put in light gray background.

VAN TWILLER—Do river, view No. 42 plus cut No. 6 of Bon Ton Rowing Club on north bank.

ROBINSON—Draw in High Bridge, view from south.

BROWN—Paint ditto, and work in foliage on shore.

LE FEBVRE—Dull, cloudy sky, nimbus effect No. 35.

SHIPPING NOTE—Place in double sweep gilt frame, Type 7, and ship at once.

Each foreman would get a sheaf of these orders in the morning, and by night the paintings would be neatly stacked to dry, each a perfect masterpiece in its way.

During the first months of our business we were seriously troubled by the large accumulation of wet paintings, and we actually had to build a special storehouse for them to dry in, while in the meantime our customers all over the country were clamoring at the nondelivery of their goods, ordered from our profusely illustrated catalogue—a veri-

table art treasure in itself, as we stated in all our advertisements. In this crisis Slapdasher again proved his genius. He devised a great drying oven built of sheet iron, in which was pivoted a series of revolving trays. The last artist to handle a painting was told to place the canvas on one of the trays as it went by the opening in the oven. The heat was so regulated that one revolution of the tray was sufficient to dry a canvas, and as the dry paintings came around boys were there to remove them to a conveyor belt, which carried them to the shipping room below. Here the paintings were at once framed and loaded on the cars while still hot.

One difficulty that faced us from the start was how to sign the paintings. Jealousy among the artists made this a delicate question to decide, until I had an inspiration and suggested that the name Slapdasher be stenciled on all our work. And so it came about that the name of Slapdasher has taken a place with that of Rembrandt as one of the most prolific of the masters.

THE KINGDOM OF THULE

by Donn Byrne

A land of dusk and many nightingales,
Of crickets' busy clamor, where the dew
Comes dropping from the upturned stars, whose blue
Depths shimmer, and the night draws seven veils
Of mystery across the hills and dales;
The owls are silent in the woods; a mew
Shrieks sea-ward, linnets murmur; and then through
The land there comes a silence. Night prevails.

Three barren oaks upon a distant hill
Show black against the primrose of the moon.
The trees are all a-rustle, and a rill
Sends down the glimm'ring dusk its ceaseless croon.
But for the bats' quick flutter all is still,
And day will come a century too soon.

THE HEART OF A TENOR

by Frank Wedekind*

CHARACTERS

GERARDO (*Wagnerian tenor, thirty-six years old*)

HELEN MAROVA (*a beautiful dark-haired woman of twenty-five*)

PROFESSOR DUHRING (*sixty, the typical "misunderstood genius"*)

MISS ISABEL CŒURNE (*a blonde English girl of sixteen*)

MULLER (*hotel manager*)

A VALET

A BELL BOY

AN UNKNOWN WOMAN

TIME: *The present.*

PLACE: *A city in Austria*

SCENE—*A large hotel room. There are doors at the right and in the center, and at the left a window with heavy portières. Behind a grand piano at the right stands a Japanese screen which conceals the fireplace. There are several large trunks, open; bunches of flowers are all over the room; many bouquets are piled up on the piano.*

VALET (*entering from the adjoining room carrying an armful of clothes which he proceeds to pack in one of the trunks. There is a knock at the door.*)
Come in.

BELL BOY

There is a lady who wants to know if the Maestro is in.

VALET

He isn't in. (*Exit BELL BOY. The VALET goes into the adjoining room and returns with another armful of clothes. There is another knock at the door. He puts the clothes on a chair and goes to the door.*) What's this again? (*He opens the door and someone hands him several large bunches of flowers, which he places carefully on the piano; then he goes back to his packing. There is another knock. He opens the door and takes a handful of letters. He glances at the addresses and reads aloud:* "Mister Gerardo. Monsieur

*Wedekind was one of the bright stars of the *Ueberbrett'*! movement in German literature. His *Spring's Awakening*, a play about sex adolescence, created a furor when it was first produced in the early years of this century

Gerardo. Gerardo Esquire. Signor Gerardo." *He drops the letters on a tray and resumes his packing.*)

(Enter GERARDO.)

GERARDO

Haven't you finished packing yet? How much longer will it take you?

VALET

I'll be through in a minute, sir.

GERARDO

Hurry! I still have things to do. Let me see. (*He reaches for something in a trunk.*) God Almighty! Don't you know how to fold a pair of trousers? (*Taking the trousers out*) This is what you call packing! Look here! You still have something to learn from me, after all. You take the trousers like this. . . . You lock this up here. . . . Then you take hold of these buttons. Watch these buttons here, that's the important thing. Then—you pull them straight . . . There. . . . There. . . . Then you fold them here. . . . See. . . . Now these trousers would keep their shape for a hundred years.

VALET (*respectfully, with downcast eyes*)

You must have been a tailor once, sir.

GERARDO

What! Well, not exactly. . . (*He gives the trousers to the VALET.*) Pack those up, but be quick about it. Now about that train. You are sure this is the last one we can take?

VALET

It is the only one that gets you there in time, sir. The next train does not reach Brussels until ten o'clock.

GERARDO

Well, then, we must catch this one. I will just have time to go over the second act. Unless I go over that. . . . Now don't let anybody . . . I am out to everybody.

VALET

All right, sir. There are some letters for you, sir.

GERARDO

I have seen them.

VALET

And flowers!

GERARDO

Yes, all right. (*He takes the letters from the tray and throws them on a chair before the piano. There he opens the letters, glances over them with beaming eyes, crumples them up and throws them under the chair.*) Remember! I am out to everybody.

VALET

I know, sir. (*He locks the trunks.*)

GERARDO

To everybody.

VALET

You needn't worry, sir. (*Giving him the trunk keys*) Here are the keys, sir.

GERARDO (*pocketing the keys*)

To everybody!

VALET

The trunks will be taken down at once.

(*He goes out.*)

GERARDO (*looking at his watch*)

Forty minutes. (*He pulls the score of "Tristan" from underneath the flowers on the piano and walks up and down humming*) "Isolde! Geliebte! Bist du mein? Hab' ich dich wieder? Darf ich dich fassen?" (*He clears his throat, strikes a chord on the piano and starts again.*) "Isolde! Geliebte! Bist du mein? Hab' ich dich wieder? . . ." (*He clears his throat.*) The air is dead here. (*He sings.*) "Isolde! Geliebte! . . ." It's oppressive here. Let's have a little fresh air. (*He goes to the windows at the left and fumbles for the curtain cord.*) Where is the thing? On the other side! Here! (*He pulls the cord and throws his head back with an annoyed expression when he sees MISS CŒURNE.*)

MISS CŒURNE (*in three-quarter length skirt, her blonde hair down her back, holding a bunch of red roses; she speaks with an English accent and looks straight at GERARDO*)

Oh, please don't send me away.

GERARDO

What else can I do? God knows, I haven't asked you to come here. Do not take it badly, dear young lady, but I have to sing tomorrow night in Brussels. I must confess, I hoped I would have this half-hour to myself. I had just given positive orders not to let anyone, whoever it might be, come up to my rooms.

MISS CŒURNE (*coming down stage*)

Don't send me away. I heard you yesterday in "Tannhäuser," and I was just bringing you these roses, and—

GERARDO

And—and what?

MISS CŒURNE

And myself. . . . I don't know whether you understand me.

GERARDO (*holding the back of a chair; he hesitates, then shakes his head*)

Who are you?

MISS CŒURNE

My name is Miss Cœurne.

GERARDO

Yes. . . . Well?

MISS CŒURNE

I am very silly.

GERARDO

I know. Come here, my dear girl. (*He sits down in an armchair and she stands before him.*) Let's have a good earnest talk, such as you have never had in your life—and seem to need. An artist like myself—don't misunderstand me; you are—how old are you?

MISS CŒURNE

Twenty-two.

GERARDO

You are sixteen or perhaps seventeen. You make yourself a little older so as to appear more—tempting. Well? Yes, you are very silly. It is really none of my business, as an artist, to cure you of your silliness. . . . Don't take this badly. . . . Now then! Why are you staring away like this?

MISS CŒURNE

I said I was very silly, because I thought you Germans liked that in a young girl.

GERARDO

I am not a German, but just the same. . . .

MISS CŒURNE

What! I am not as silly as all that.

GERARDO

Now look here, my dear girl—you have your tennis court, your skating club; you have your riding class, your dances; you have all a young girl can wish for. What on earth made you come to me?

MISS CŒURNE

Because all those things are awful, and they bore me to death.

GERARDO

I will not dispute that. Personally, I must tell you, I know life from an entirely different side. But, my child, I am a man; I am thirty-six. The time will come when you, too, will claim a fuller existence. Wait another two years and there will be someone for you, and then you won't need to—hide yourself behind curtains, in my room, in the room of a man who—never asked you, and whom you don't know any better than—the whole continent of Europe knows him—in order to look at life from his—wonderful point of view. (MISS CŒURNE *sighs deeply*.) Now then. . . . Many thanks from the bottom of my heart for your roses. (He *presses her hand*.) Will this do for today?

MISS CŒURNE

I had never in all my life thought of a man, until I saw you on the stage last night in "Tannhäuser." And I promise you—

GERARDO

Oh, don't promise me anything, my child. What good could your promise do me? The burden of it would all fall upon you. You see, I am talking to you as lovingly as the most loving father could. Be thankful to God that with your recklessness you haven't fallen into the hands of another artist. (He *presses her hand again*.) Let this be a lesson to you and never try it again. .

MISS CŒURNE (*holding her handkerchief to her face but shedding no tear*.)

Am I so homely?

GERARDO

Homely! Not homely, but young and indiscreet. (*He rises nervously, goes to the right, comes back, puts his arm around her waist and takes her hand.*) Listen to me, child. You are not homely because I have to be a singer, because I have to be an artist. Don't misunderstand me, but I can't see why I should simply, because I am an artist, have to assure you that I appreciate your youthful freshness and beauty. It is a question of time. Two hundred, maybe three hundred, nice, lovely girls of your age saw me last night in the rôle of Tannhäuser. Now if every one of those girls made the same demands upon me which you are making—what would become of my singing? What would become of my voice? What would become of my art?

(*MISS CŒURNE sinks into a seat, covers her face and weeps.*)

GERARDO (*leaning over the back of her chair, in a friendly tone*)

It is a crime for you, child, to weep over the fact that you are still so young. Your whole life is ahead of you. Is it my fault if you fell in love with me? They all do. That is what I am for. Now won't you be a good girl and let me, for the few minutes I have left, prepare myself for tomorrow's appearance?

MISS CŒURNE (*rising and drying her tears*)

I can't believe that any other girl would have acted the way I have.

GERARDO (*leading her to the door*)

No, dear child.

MISS CŒURNE (*with sobs in her voice*)

At least, not if—

GERARDO

If my valet had stood before the door.

MISS CŒURNE

If—

GERARDO

If the girl had been as beautiful and youthfully fresh as you.

MISS CŒURNE

I,—

GERARDO

If she had heard me only once in "Tannhäuser."

MISS CŒURNE (*indignant*)

If she were as respectable as I am!

GERARDO (*pointing to the piano*)

Before saying good-bye to me, child, have a look at all those flowers May this be a warning to you in case you feel tempted again to fall in love with a singer. See how fresh they all are. And I have to let them wither, dry up, or I give them to the porter And look at those letters. (*He takes a handful of them from a tray*) I don't know any of those women Don't worry, I leave them all to their fate What else could I do? But I'll wager with you that every one of your lovely young friends sent in her little note

MISS CŒURNE

Well, I promise not to do it again, not to hide myself behind your curtains But don't send me away

GERARDO

My time, my time, dear child If I were not on the point of taking a train! I have already told you, I am very sorry for you But my train leaves in twenty-five minutes What do you expect?

MISS CŒURNE

A kiss.

GERARDO (*stiffening up*)

From me?

MISS CŒURNE

Yes

GERARDO (*holding her around the waist and looking very serious*)

You rob Art of its dignity, my child I do not wish to appear an unfeeling brute, and I am going to give you my picture Give me your word that after that you will leave me

MISS CŒURNE

Yes.

GERARDO

Good. (*He sits at the table and autographs one of his pictures*) You should try to become interested in the operas themselves instead of the men who sing them You would probably derive much greater enjoyment.

MISS CŒURNE (*to herself*)

I am too young yet.

GERARDO

Sacrifice yourself to music. (*He comes down stage and gives her the picture.*) Don't see in me a famous tenor but a mere tool in the hands of a noble master. Look at all the married women among your acquaintances. All Wagnerians. Study Wagner's words; learn to understand his *leit motifs*. That will save you from further foolishness.

MISS CŒURNE

I thank you.

(GERARDO *leads her out and rings the bell. He takes up his piano score again. There is a knock at the door.*)

VALET (*coming in out of breath*)

Yes, sir.

GERARDO

Are you standing at the door?

VALET

Not just now, sir.

GERARDO

Of course not! Be sure not to let anybody come up here.

VALET

There were three ladies who asked for you, sir.

GERARDO

Don't you dare to let any one of them come up, whatever she may tell you.

VALET

And then here are some more letters.

GERARDO

Oh, all right. (*The VALET places the letters on a tray.*) And don't you dare to let anyone come up.

VALET (*at the door*)

No, sir.

GERARDO

Even if she offers to settle a fortune upon you.

VALET

No, sir.

*(He goes out.)*GERARDO *(singing)*

"*Isolda! Geliebte! Bist du . . .*" Well, if women don't get tired of me—Only the world is so full of them; and I am only one man. Everyone has his burden to carry. *(He strikes a chord on the piano.)*

(PROF. DUHRING, dressed all in black, with a long white beard, a red hooked nose, gold spectacles, Prince Albert coat and silk hat, an opera score under his arm, enters without knocking.)

GERARDO

What do you want?

DUHRING

Maestro—I—have—an opera.

GERARDO

How did you get in?

DUHRING

I have been watching for two hours for a chance to run up the stairs unnoticed.

GERARDO

But, my dear good man, I have no time.

DUHRING

Oh, I will not play the whole opera for you.

GERARDO

I haven't the time. My train leaves in forty minutes.

DUHRING

You haven't the time! What should I say? You are thirty and successful. You have your whole life to live yet. Just listen to your part in my opera. You promised to listen to it when you came to this city.

GERARDO

What is the use? I am not a free agent—

DUHRING

Please! Please! Please, Maestro! I stand before you an old man, ready to fall on my knees before you; an old man who has never cared

for anything in the world but his art. For fifty years I have been a willing victim to the tyranny of art—

GERARDO (*interrupting him*)

Yes, I understand; I understand, but—

DUHRING (*excitedly*)

No, you don't understand. You could not understand. How could you, the favorite of fortune, you understand what fifty years of bootless work means? But I will try to make you understand it. You see, I am too old to take my own life. People who do that do it at twenty-five, and I let the time pass by. I must now drag along to the end of my days. Please sir, please don't let these moments pass in vain for me, even if you have to lose a day thereby, a week even. This is in your own interest. A week ago, when you first came for your special appearances, you promised to let me play my opera for you. I have come here every day since; either you had a rehearsal or a woman caller. And now you are on the point of going away. You have only to say one word: I will sing the part of Hermann—and they will produce my opera. You will then thank God for my insistence. . . . Of course you sing Siegfried, you sing Florestan—but you have no rôle like Hermann in your repertoire, no rôle better suited to your middle register.

(GERARDO *leans against the mantelpiece; while drumming on the top with his right hand, he discovers something behind the screen; he suddenly stretches out his arm and pulls out a woman in a gray gown, whom he leads out of the room through the middle door; after closing the door, he turns to DUHRING.*)

GERARDO

Oh, are you still there?

DUHRING (*undisturbed*)

This opera is good; it is dramatic; it is a financial success. I can show you letters from Liszt, from Wagner, from Rubinstein, in which they consider me as a superior man. And why hasn't my opera ever been produced? Because I am not crying my wares on the marketplace. And then you know our directors; they will revive ten dead men before they give a live man a chance. Their walls are well guarded. At thirty you are in. At sixty I am still out. One word from you and I shall be in, too. This is why I have come, and (*Raising his voice*) if you are not an unfeeling brute, if success has not killed in you the last spark of artistic sympathy, you will not refuse to hear my work. ♪

GERARDO

I will give you an answer in a week. I will go over your opera. Let me have it.

DUHRING

No, I am too old, Maestro. In a week, in what you call a week, I shall be dead and buried. In a week—that is what they all say; and then they keep it for years.

GERARDO

I am very sorry but—

DUHRING

Tomorrow perhaps you will be on your knees before me; you will boast of knowing me. . . . and today, in your sordid lust for gold, you cannot even spare the half-hour which would mean the breaking of my fetters.

GERARDO

No, really, I have only thirty-five minutes left, and unless I go over a few passages. . . . You know I sing *Tristan* in Brussels tomorrow night. (*He pulls out his watch.*) I haven't even half an hour. . . .

DUHRING

Half an hour . . . Oh, then, let me play to you your big aria at the end of the first act. (*He attempts to sit down on the piano bench. GERARDO restrains him.*)

GERARDO

Now, frankly, my dear sir . . . I am a singer; I am not a critic. If you wish to have your opera produced, address yourself to those gentlemen who are paid to know what is good and what is not. People scorn and ignore my opinions in such matters as completely as they appreciate and admire my singing.

DUHRING

My dear Maestro, you may take it from me that I myself attach no importance whatever to your judgment. What do I care about your opinions? I know you tenors; I would like to play my score for you so that you could say: "I would like to sing the rôle of Hermann."

GERARDO

If you only knew how many things I would like to do and which I have to renounce, and how many things I must do for which I do not

care in the least! Half a million a year does not repay me for the many joys of life which I must sacrifice for the sake of my profession. I am not a free man. But you were a free man all your life. Why didn't you go to the marketplace and cry your wares?

DUHRING

Oh, the vulgarity of it . . . I have tried it a hundred times. I am a composer, Maestro, and nothing more.

GERARDO

By which you mean that you have exhausted all your strength in the writing of your operas and kept none of it to secure their production.

DUHRING

That is true.

GERARDO

The composers I know reverse the process. They get their operas written somehow and then spend all their strength in an effort to get them produced.

DUHRING

That is the type of artist I despise.

GERARDO

Well, I despise the type of man that wastes his life in useless endeavor. What have you done in those fifty years of struggle, for yourself or for the world? Fifty years of useless struggle! That should convince the worst blockhead of the impracticability of his dreams. What have you done with your life? You have wasted it shamefully. If I had wasted my life as you have wasted yours—of course I am only speaking for myself—I don't think I should have the courage to look anyone in the face.

DUHRING

I am not doing it for myself; I am doing it for my art.

GERARDO (*scornfully*)

Art, my dear man! Let me tell you that art is quite different from what the papers tell us it is.

DUHRING

To me it is the highest thing in the world.

GERARDO

You may believe that, but nobody else does. We artists are merely a luxury for the use of the *bourgeoisie*. When I stand there on the stage I feel absolutely certain that not one solitary human being in the audience takes the slightest interest in what we, the artists, are doing. If they did, how could they listen to "Die Walküre," for instance? Why, it is an indecent story which could not be mentioned anywhere in polite society. And yet, when I sing Siegmund, the most puritanical mothers bring their fourteen-year-old daughters to hear me. This, you see, is the meaning of whatever you call art. This is what you have sacrificed fifty years of your life to. Find out how many people came to hear me sing and how many came to gape at me as they would at the Emperor of China if he should turn up here tomorrow. Do you know what the artistic wants of the public consist in? To applaud, to send flowers, to have a subject for conversation, to see and be seen. They pay me half a million, but then I make business for hundreds of cabbies, writers, dressmakers, restaurant keepers. It keeps money circulating; it keeps blood running. It gets girls engaged, spinsters married, wives tempted, old cronies supplied with gossip; a woman loses her pocketbook in the crowd, a fellow becomes insane during the performance. Doctors, lawyers make. . . . (*He coughs.*) And with this I must sing Tristan in Brussels tomorrow night! I tell you all this, not out of vanity, but to cure you of your delusions. The measure of a man's worth is the world's opinion of him, not the inner belief which one finally adopts after brooding over it for years. Don't imagine that you are a misunderstood genius. There are no misunderstood geniuses.

DUHRING

Let me just play to you the first scene of the second act. A park landscape as in the painting, "Embarkation for the Isle of Cythera."

GERARDO

I repeat to you I have no time. And furthermore, since Wagner's death the need for new operas has never been felt by anyone. If you come with new music, you set against yourself all the music schools, the artists, the public. If you want to succeed just steal enough out of Wagner's works to make up a whole opera. Why should I cudgel my brains with your new music when I have cudgelled them cruelly with the old?

DUHRING (*holding out his trembling hand*)

I am afraid I am too old to learn how to steal. Unless one begins very young, one can never learn it.

GERARDO

Don't feel hurt. My dear sir—if I could . . . The thought of how you have to struggle . . . I happen to have received some five hundred marks more than my fee . . .

DUHRING (*turning to the door*)

Don't! Please don't! Do not say that. I did not try to show you my opera in order to work a touch. No, I think too much of this child of my brain . . . No, Maestro.

(*He goes out through the center door*)

GERARDO (*following him to the door*)

I beg your pardon. . . . Pleased to have met you.

(*He closes the door and sinks into an armchair. A voice is heard outside: "I will not let that man step in my way." HELEN rushes into the room followed by the VALET. She is an unusually beautiful young woman in street dress.*)

HELEN

That man stood there to prevent me from seeing you!

GERARDO

Helen!

HELEN

You knew that I would come to see you.

VALET (*rubbing his cheek*)

I did all I could, sir, but this lady actually—

HELEN

Yes, I slapped his face.

GERARDO

Helen!

HELEN

Should I have let him insult me?

GERARDO (*to the VALET*)

Please leave us.

(*The VALET goes out.*)

HELEN (*placing her muff on a chair*)

I can no longer live without you. Either you take me with you or I will kill myself.

GERARDO

Helen!

HELEN

Yes, kill myself. A day like yesterday, without even seeing you—no I could not live through that again. I am not strong enough. I beseech you, Oscar, take me with you.

GERARDO

I couldn't.

HELEN

You could if you wanted to. You can't leave me without killing me. These are not mere words. This isn't a threat. It is a fact: I will die if I can no longer have you. You must take me with you—it is your duty—if only for a short time.

GERARDO

I give you my word of honor, Helen, I can't—I give you my word.

HELEN

You must, Oscar. Whether you can or not, you must bear the consequences of your acts. I love life, but to me life and you are one and the same thing. Take me with you, Oscar, if you don't want to have my blood on your hands.

GERARDO

Do you remember what I said to you the first day we were together here?

HELEN

I remember, but what good does that do me?

GERARDO

I said that there couldn't be any question of love between us.

HELEN

I can't help that. I didn't know you then. I never knew what a man could be to me until I met you. You knew very well that it would come to this, otherwise you wouldn't have obliged me to promise not to make you a parting scene.

GERARDO

I simply cannot take you with me.

HELEN

Oh, God! I knew you would say that! I knew it when I came here. That's what you say to every woman. And I am just one of a hundred. I know it. But, Oscar, I am lovesick; I am dying of love. This is your work, and you can save me without any sacrifice on your part, without assuming any burden. Why can't you do it?

GERARDO (*very slowly*)

Because my contract forbids me to marry or to travel in the company of a woman.

HELEN (*disturbed*)

What can prevent you?

GERARDO

My contract.

HELEN

You cannot. . . .

GERARDO

I cannot marry until my contract expires.

HELEN

And you cannot . . .

GERARDO

I cannot travel in the company of a woman.

HELEN

That is incredible. And whom in the world should it concern?

GERARDO

My manager.

HELEN

Your manager! What business is it of his?

GERARDO

It is precisely his business.

HELEN

Is it perhaps because it might—affect your voice?

GERARDO

Yes.

HELEN

That is preposterous. Does it affect your voice?

(GERARDO *chuckles*.)

HELEN

Does your manager believe that nonsense?

GERARDO

No, he doesn't.

HELEN

This is beyond me. I can't understand how a decent man could sign such a contract.

GERARDO

I am an artist first and a man next.

HELEN

Yes, that's what you are—a great artist—an eminent artist. Can't you understand how much I must love you? You are the first man whose superiority I have felt and whom I desired to please, and you despise me for it. I have bitten my lips many a time not to let you suspect how much you meant to me; I was so afraid I might bore you. Yesterday, however, put me in a state of mind which no woman can endure. If I didn't love you so insanely, Oscar, you would think more of me. That is the terrible thing about you—that you must scorn a woman who thinks the world of you.

GERARDO

Helen!

HELEN

Your contract! Don't use your contract as a weapon to murder me with. Let me go with you, Oscar. You will see if your manager ever mentions a breach of contract. He would not do such a thing. I know men. And if he says a word, it will be time then for me to die.

GERARDO

We have no right to do that, Helen. You are just as little free to follow me, as I am to shoulder such a responsibility. I don't belong to myself; I belong to my art.

HELEN

Oh, leave your art alone. What do I care about your art? Has God created a man like you to make a puppet of himself every night? You should be ashamed of it instead of boasting of it. You see, I overlooked the fact that you were merely an artist. What wouldn't I overlook for a god like you? Even if you were a convict, Oscar, my feelings would be the same. I would lie in the dust at your feet and beg for your pity.

I would face death as I am facing it now.

GERARDO (*laughing*)

Facing death, Helen! Women who are endowed with your gift for enjoying life don't make away with themselves. You know even better than I do the value of life.

HELEN (*dreamily*)

Oscar, I didn't say that I would shoot myself. When did I say that? Where would I find the courage to do that? I only said that I will die, if you don't take me with you. I will die as I would of an illness, for I only live when I am with you. I can live without my home, without my children, but not without you, Oscar. I cannot live without you.

GERARDO

Helen, if you don't calm yourself. . . . You put me in an awful position. . . . I have only ten minutes left . . . I can't explain in court that your excitement made me break my contract . . . I can only give you ten minutes. . . . If you don't calm yourself in that time . . . I can't leave you alone in this condition. Think all you have at stake!

HELEN

As though I had anything else at stake!

GERARDO

You can lose your position in society.

HELEN

I can lose you!

GERARDO

And your family!

HELEN

I care for no one but you.

GERARDO

But I cannot be yours.

HELEN

Then I have nothing to lose but my life.

GERARDO

Your children!

HELEN

Who has taken me from them, Oscar? Who has taken me from my children?

GERARDO

Did I make any advances to you?

HELEN (*passionately*)

No, no. I have thrown myself at you, and would throw myself at you again. Neither my husband nor my children could keep me back. When I die, at least I will have lived; thanks to you, Oscar! I thank you, Oscar, for revealing me to myself. I thank you for that.

GERARDO

Helen, calm yourself and listen to me.

HELEN

Yes, yes, for ten minutes.

GERARDO

Listen to me. (*Both sit down on the divan.*)

HELEN (*staring at him*)

Yes, I thank you for it.

GERARDO

Helen!

HELEN

I don't even ask you to love me. Let me only breathe the air you breathe.

GERARDO (*trying to be calm*)

Helen—a man of my type cannot be swayed by any of the bourgeois ideas. I have known society women in every country of the world. Some made parting scenes to me, but at least they all knew what they owed to their position. This is the first time in my life that I have wit-

nessed such an outburst of passion. . . . Helen, the temptation comes to me daily to step with some woman into an idyllic Arcadia. But every human being has his duties; you have your duties as I have mine, and the call of duty is the highest thing in the world. . . .

HELEN

I know better than you do what the highest duty is.

GERARDO

What, then? Your love for me? That's what they all say. Whatever a woman has set her heart on winning is to her good; whatever crosses her plans is evil. It is the fault of our playwrights. To draw full houses they set the world upside down, and when a woman abandons her children and her family to follow her instincts they call that—oh, broad-mindedness. I personally wouldn't mind living the way turtle doves live. But since I am a part of this world I must obey my duty first. Then whenever the opportunity arises I quaff of the cup of joy. Whoever refuses to do his duty has no right to make any demands upon another fellow being.

HELEN (*staring absent-mindedly*)

That does not bring the dead back to life.

GERARDO (*nervously*)

Helen, I will give you back your life. I will give you back what you have sacrificed for me. For God's sake take it. What does it come to, after all? Helen, how can a woman lower herself to that point? Where is your pride? What am I in the eyes of the world? A man who makes a puppet of himself every night! Helen, are you going to kill yourself for a man whom hundreds of women loved before you, whom hundreds of women will love after you without letting their feelings disturb their life one second? Will you, by shedding your warm red blood, make yourself ridiculous before God and the world?

HELEN (*looking away from him*)

I know I am asking a good deal, but—what else can I do?

GERARDO

Helen, you said I should bear the consequences of my acts. Will you reproach me for not refusing to receive you when you first came here, ostensibly to ask me to try your voice? What can a man do in such a case? You are the beauty of this town. Either I would be known as the

bear among artists who denies himself to all women callers, or I might have received you and pretended that I didn't understand what you meant and then pass for a fool. Or the very first day I might have talked to you as frankly as I am talking now. Dangerous business. You would have called me a conceited idiot. Tell me, Helen—what else could I do?

HELEN (*staring at him with imploring eyes, shuddering and making an effort to speak*)

Oh, God— Oh, God! Oscar, what would you say if tomorrow I should go and be as happy with another man as I have been with you? Oscar—what would you say?

GERARDO (*after a silence*)

Nothing. (*He looks at his watch.*) Helen—

HELEN

Oscar! (*She kneels before him.*) For the last time, I implore you . . . You don't know what you are doing. . . . It isn't your fault—but don't let me die. . . . Save me—save me!

GERARDO (*raising her up*)

Helen, I am not such a wonderful man. How many men have you known? The more men you come to know, the lower all men will fall in your estimation. When you know men better you will not take your life for any one of them. You will not think any more of them than I do of women.

HELEN

I am not like you in that respect.

GERARDO

I speak earnestly, Helen. We don't fall in love with one person or another; we fall in love with our type, which we find everywhere in the world if we only look sharply enough.

HELEN

And when we meet our type, are we sure then of being loved again?

GERARDO (*angrily*)

You have no right to complain of your husband. Was any girl ever compelled to marry against her will? That is all rot. It is only the women who have sold themselves for certain material advantages and then try to dodge their obligations who try to make us believe that nonsense.

HELEN (*smiling*)

They break their contracts.

GERARDO (*pounding his chest*)

When I sell myself, at least I am honest about it.

HELEN

Isn't love honest?

GERARDO

No! Love is a beastly bourgeois virtue. Love is the last refuge of the mollicoddle, of the coward. In my world every man has his actual value, and when two human beings make up a pack they know exactly what to expect from each other. Love has nothing to do with it, either.

HELEN

Won't you lead me into your world, then?

GERARDO

Helen, will you compromise the happiness of your life and the happiness of your dear ones for just a few days' pleasure?

HELEN

No.

GERARDO (*much relieved*)

Will you promise me to go home quietly now?

HELEN

Yes.

GERARDO

And will you promise me that you will not die. . . .

HELEN

Yes.

GERARDO

You promise me that?

HELEN

Yes.

GERARDO

And you promise me to fulfill your duties as mother and—as wife?

HELEN

Yes.

GERARDO

Helen!

HELEN

Yes, What else do you want? I will promise anything

GERARDO

And now may I go away in peace?

HELEN (*rising*)

Yes.

GERARDO

A last kiss?

HELEN

Yes, yes, yes.

(*They kiss passionately.*)

GERARDO

In a year I am booked again to sing here, Helen.

HELEN

In a year! Oh I am glad!

GERARDO (*tenderly*)

Helen!

(*HELEN presses his hand, takes a revolver out of her muff, shoots herself and falls.*)

GERARDO

Helen! (*He totters and collapses in an armchair.*)BELL BOY (*rustling in*)My God! Mr. Gerardo! (*GERARDO remains motionless; the BELL BOY rushes toward HELEN.*)GERARDO (*jumping up, running to the door and colliding with the manager of the hotel.*)Send for the police! I must be arrested! If I went away now I should be a brute, and if I stay I break my contract. I still have (*looking at his watch*) one minute and ten seconds.

MANAGER

Fred, run and get a policeman.

BELL BOY

All right, sir.

MANAGER

Be quick about it. (*To GERARDO*) Don't take it too hard, sir. Those things happen once in a while.

GERARDO (*kneeling before HELEN's body and taking her hand*)

Helen! . . . She still lives—she still lives! If I am arrested I am not wilfully breaking my contract. . . . And my trunks? Is the carriage at the door?

MANAGER

It has been waiting twenty minutes, Mr. Gerardo. (*He opens the door for the porter, who takes down one of the trunks.*)

GERARDO (*bending over her*)

Helen! (*To himself*) Well, after all . . . (*To MUELLER*) Have you called a doctor?

MANAGER

Yes, we had the doctor called at once. He will be here at any minute.

GERARDO (*holding her under the arms*)

Helen! Don't you know me any more? Helen! The doctor will be here right away, Helen. This is your Oscar.

BELL BOY (*appearing in the door at the center*)

Can't find any policeman, sir.

GERARDO (*letting HELEN's body drop back*)

Well, if I can't get arrested, that settles it. I must catch that train and sing in Brussels tomorrow night.

(*He takes up his score and runs out through the center door, bumping against several chairs.*)

CURTAIN

THE BOARDING HOUSE

by James Joyce*

Mrs. Mooney was a butcher's daughter. She was a woman who was quite able to keep things to herself: a determined woman. She had married her father's foreman and opened a butcher's shop near Spring Gardens. But as soon as his father-in-law was dead Mr. Mooney began to go to the devil. He drank, plundered the till, ran headlong into debt. It was no use making him take the pledge: he was sure to break out again a few days after. By fighting his wife in the presence of customers and by buying bad meat he ruined his business. One night he went for his wife with the cleaver and she had to sleep in a neighbor's house.

After that they lived apart. She went to the priest and got a separation from him with care of the children. She would give him neither money nor food nor house-room; and so he was obliged to enlist himself as a sheriff's man. He was a shabby, stooped little drunkard with a white face and a white moustache and white eyebrows, pencilled above his little eyes, which were pink-veined and raw; and all day long he sat in the bailiff's room, waiting to be put on a job. Mrs. Mooney, who had taken what remained of her money out of the butcher business and set up a boarding-house in Hardwicke Street, was a big, imposing woman. Her house had a floating population made up of tourists from Liverpool and the Isle of Man and, occasionally, *artistes* from the music halls. Its resident population was made up of clerks from the city. She governed the house cunningly and firmly, knew when to give credit, when to be stern and when to let things pass. All the resident young men spoke of her as *The Madam*.

Mrs. Mooney's young men paid fifteen shillings a week for board and lodgings (beer or stout at dinner excluded). They shared in common tastes and occupations and for this reason they were very chummy with one another. They discussed with one another the chances of favorites and outsiders. Jack Mooney, the Madam's son, who was clerk to a commission agent in Fleet Street, had the reputation of

* This story by the famous author of *Ulysses* was later included in *Dubliners*, a collection of short stories which the English publisher who had contracted for it refused to publish because of an allegedly disrespectful reference in one of the stories to the late King Edward VII.

being a hard case. He was fond of using soldiers' obscenities: usually he came home in the small hours. When he met his friends he had always a good one to tell them and he was always sure to be onto a good thing—that is to say, a likely horse or a likely *artiste*. He was also handy with the mitts and sang comic songs. On Sunday nights there would often be a reunion in Mrs. Mooney's front drawing-room. The music-hall *artistes* would oblige; and Sheridan played waltzes and polkas and vamped accompaniments. Polly Mooney, the Madam's daughter, would also sing. She sang:

*"I'm a . . . naughty girl.
You needn't sham:
You know I am."*

Polly was a slim girl of nineteen; she had light, soft hair and a small, full mouth. Her eyes, which were gray with a shade of green through them, had a habit of glancing upwards when she spoke with anyone, which made her look like a little perverse Madonna. Mrs. Mooney had first sent her daughter to be a typist in a corn-factor's office but, as a disreputable sheriff's man used to come every other day to the office, asking to be allowed to say a word to his daughter, she had taken her daughter home again and set her to do housework. As Polly was very lively the intention was to give her the run of the young men. Besides, young men like to feel that there is a young woman not very far away. Polly, of course, flirted with the young men, but Mrs. Mooney, who was a shrewd judge, knew that the young men were only passing the time away: none of them meant business. Things went on so for a long time and Mrs. Mooney began to think of sending Polly back to typewriting, when she noticed that something was going on between Polly and one of the young men. She watched the pair and kept her own counsel.

Polly knew that she was being watched, but still her mother's persistent silence could not be misunderstood. There had been no open complicity between mother and daughter, no open understanding but, though people in the house began to talk of the affair, still Mrs. Mooney did not intervene. Polly began to grow a little strange in her manner and the young man was evidently perturbed. At last, when she judged it to be the right moment, Mrs. Mooney intervened. She dealt with moral problems as a cleaver deals with meats, and in this case she had made up her mind.

It was a bright Sunday morning of early summer, promising heat, but with a fresh breeze blowing. All the windows of the boarding-house were open and the lace curtains ballooned gently towards the street beneath the raised sashes. The belfry of George's Church sent out constant peals and worshipers, singly or in groups, traversed the little circus before the church, revealing their purpose by their self-contained demeanor no less than by the little volumes in their gloved hands. Breakfast was over in the boarding-house and the table of the breakfast-room was covered with plates on which lay yellow streaks of eggs with morsels of bacon-fat and bacon-rind. Mrs. Mooney sat in the straw armchair and watched the servant, Mary, remove the breakfast things. She made Mary collect the crusts and pieces of broken bread to help to make Tuesday's bread-pudding. When the table was cleared, the broken bread collected, the sugar and butter safe under lock and key, she began to reconstruct the interview which she had had the night before with Polly. Things were as she had suspected: she had been frank in her questions and Polly had been frank in her answers. Both had been somewhat awkward, of course. She had been made awkward by her not wishing to receive the news in too cavalier a fashion or to seem to have connived, and Polly had been made awkward not merely because allusions of that kind always made her awkward but also because she did not wish it to be thought that in her wise innocence she had divined the intention behind her mother's tolerance.

Mrs. Mooney glanced instinctively at the little gilt clock on the mantelpiece as soon as she had become aware through her reverie that the bells of George's Church had stopped ringing. It was seventeen minutes past eleven: she would have lots of time to have the matter out with Mr. Doran and then catch short twelve at Marlborough Street she was sure she would win. To begin with she had all the weight of social opinion on her side: she was an outraged mother. She had allowed him to live beneath her roof, assuming that he was a man of honor, and he had simply abused her hospitality. He was thirty-four or thirty-five years of age, so that youth could not be pleaded as his excuse; nor could ignorance be his excuse since he was a man who had seen something of the world. He had simply taken advantage of Polly's youth and inexperience: that was evident. The question was: What reparation would he make?

There must be reparation made in such case. It is all very well for the man: he can go his ways as if nothing had happened, having had his

moment of pleasure, but the girl has to bear the brunt. Some girls' mothers would be content to patch up such an affair for a sum of money; she had known cases of it. But she would not do so. For her only one reparation could make up for the loss of her daughter's honor: marriage.

She counted all her cards again before sending Mary up to Mr. Doran's room to say that she wished to speak with him. She felt sure she would win. He was a serious young man, not rakish or loud-voiced like the others. If it had been Mr. Sheridan or Mr. Meade or Bantam Lyons her task would have been much harder. She did not think he would face publicity. All the lodgers in the house knew something of the affair; details had been invented by some. Besides, he had been employed for thirteen years in a great Catholic wine-merchant's office and publicity would mean for him, perhaps, the loss of his job. Whereas if he agreed all might be well. She knew he had a good screw for one thing and she suspected he had a bit of stuff put by.

Nearly the half hour! She stood up and surveyed herself in the pier-glass. The decisive expression of her great florid face satisfied her and she thought of some mothers she knew who could not get their daughters off their hands.

Mr. Doran was very anxious indeed this Sunday morning. He had made two attempts to shave, but his hand had been so unsteady that he had been obliged to desist. Three days' reddish beard fringed his jaws and every two or three minutes a mist gathered on his glasses so that he had to take them off and polish them with his pocket handkerchief. The recollection of his confession of the night before was a cause of acute pain to him; the priest had drawn out every ridiculous detail of the affair and in the end had so magnified his sin that he was almost thankful at being afforded a loophole of reparation. The harm was done. What could he do now but marry her or run away? He could not brazen it out. The affair would be sure to be talked of and his employer would be certain to hear of it. Dublin is such a small city: everyone knows everyone else's business. He felt his heart leap warmly in his throat as he heard in his excited imagination old Mr. Leonard calling out in his rasping voice: "Send Mr. Doran here, please."

All his long years of service gone for nothing! All his industry and diligence thrown away! As a young man he had sown his wild oats, of course; he had boasted of his free-thinking and denied the existence of God to his companions in public houses. But that was all passed and

done with . . . nearly. He still bought a copy of *Reynolds's Newspaper* every week, but he attended to his religious duties and for nine-tenths of the year lived a regular life. He had money enough to settle down on; it was not that. But the family would look down on her. First of all there was her disreputable father, and then her mother's boarding-house was beginning to get a certain fame. He had a notion that he was being had. He could imagine his friends talking of the affair and laughing. She was a little vulgar; sometimes she said "I seen" and "If I had've known." But what would grammar matter if he really loved her? He could not make up his mind whether to like her or despise her for what she had done. Of course, he had done it, too. His instinct urged him to remain free, not to marry. Once you are married you are done for, it said.

While he was sitting helplessly on the side of the bed in shirt and trousers she tapped lightly at his door and entered. She told him all, that she had made a clean breast of it to her mother and that her mother would speak with him that morning. She cried and threw her arms round his neck, saying:

"Oh, Bob! Bob! What am I to do? What am I to do at all?"

She would put an end to herself, she said.

He comforted her feebly, telling her not to cry, that it would be all right, never fear. He felt against his shirt the agitation of her bosom.

It was not altogether his fault that it had happened. He remembered well, with the curious patient memory of the celibate, the first casual caresses, her dress, her breath, her fingers had given him. Then late one night as he was undressing for bed she had tapped at his door, timidly. She wanted to relight her candle at his for hers had been blown out by a gust. It was her bath night. She wore a loose, open combing-jacket of printed flannel. Her white instep shone in the opening of her furry slippers and the blood glowed warmly behind her perfumed skin. From her hands and wrists, too, as she lit and steadied her candle, a faint perfume arose.

On nights when he came in very late it was she who warmed up his dinner. He scarcely knew what he was eating, feeling her beside him alone, at night, in the sleeping house. And her thoughtfulness! If the night was anyway cold or wet or windy there was sure to be a little tumbler of punch ready for him. Perhaps they could be happy together. . . .

They used to go upstairs together on tiptoe, each with a candle, and

on the third landing exchange reluctant good nights. They used to kiss. He remembered well her eyes, the touch of her hand and his delirium. . . .

But delirium passes. He echoed her phrase, applying it to himself: "*What am I to do?*" The instinct of the celibate warned him to hold back. But the sin was there; even his sense of honor told him that reparation must be made for such a sin.

While he was sitting with her on the side of the bed Mary came to the door and said that the missus wanted to see him in the parlor. He stood up to put on his coat and waistcoat, more helpless than ever. When he was dressed he went over to her to comfort her. It would be all right, never fear. He left her crying on the bed and moaning softly: "*O my God!*"

Going down the stairs his glasses became so dimmed with moisture that he had to take them off and polish them. He longed to ascend through the roof and fly away to another country where he would never hear again of his trouble, and yet a force pushed him downstairs step by step. The implacable faces of his employer and of the Madam stared upon his discomfiture. On the last flight of stairs he passed Jack Mooney, who was coming up from the pantry nursing two bottles of *Bass*. They saluted coldly; and the lover's eyes rested for a second or two on a thick bulldog face and a pair of thick, short arms. When he reached the foot of the staircase he glanced up and saw Jack regarding him from the door of the return-room.

Suddenly he remembered the night when one of the music-hall *artistes*, a little blonde Londoner, had made a rather free allusion to Polly. The reunion had been almost broken up on account of Jack's violence. Everyone tried to quiet him. The music-hall *artiste*, a little paler than usual, kept smiling and saying that there was no harm meant; but Jack kept shouting at him that if any fellow tried that sort of a game on with *his* sister he'd bloody well put his teeth down his throat, so he would.

Polly sat for a little time on the side of the bed, crying. Then she dried her eyes and went over to the looking-glass. She dipped the end of the towel in the water-jug and refreshed her eyes with the cool water. She looked at herself in profile and readjusted a hairpin above her ear. Then she went back to the bed again and sat at the foot. She regarded the pillows for a long time and the sight of them awakened in her mind secret amiable memories. She rested the nape of her neck against

the cool iron bedrail and fell into a reverie. There was no longer any perturbation visible on her face.

She waited on patiently, almost cheerfully, without alarm, her memories gradually giving place to hopes and visions of the future. Her hopes and visions were so intricate that she no longer saw the white pillows on which her gaze was fixed or remembered that she was waiting for anything.

At last she heard her mother calling. She started to her feet and ran to the banisters.

"Polly! Polly!"

"Yes, mamma?"

"Come down, dear. Mr. Doran wants to speak to you."

Then she remembered what she had been waiting for.

TRANSVALUATION

by Orrick Johns

Out of the depths to the depths I call—not to the heights soon ending!

Who from the half descended mountain would turn back to the top?
What has life for our further spending
Left in her tinsel shop?

Out of the night to the night I go—to the vast black suns that swallow!

Who would pray to the callow noons, the copper dawns absurd?
Let me go far where none may follow
And no cry is heard!

Let me go far where loves are freed from the lesser loves that bond them!

What is this little dream of man, this little space of breath?
Sure, O gods, there are gifts beyond them:
Evil and good and death!

Sure, O gods, they are little things, since time can make them nothing,

And sure they are little men who fight, and little foes who mar!
Give me, O gods, the fire of loathing
And in the depths, a star!

THE SENTIMENTALIST

*by Sara Teasdale**

SHE had taught for seven years in a boarding-school for girls, and though she was not always patient, half of the pupils adored her. She watched their worship with an amused reserve that baffled them; and in spite of her sense of humor they thought her romantic—perhaps because her parents were dead and because she wrote short stories. The back numbers of the magazines that held her work were soiled with much treasuring. They had passed from generation to generation of school girls, but the delicate intensity of the tales looked to an older audience for appreciation.

One morning while she was dressing, she noticed three white hairs. She felt that they had come too soon—she was twenty-eight—and they made her a little bitter. After that, she saw them every time she arranged her hair.

It was some months later that she learned of a small fortune, her inheritance from a great-uncle. The news was as a sudden coming of spring to her. In the girls' eyes she was beautiful that day; life was waiting for her. She handed in her resignation for the fall term, and at night, when she met one of the girls in the dark corridor, she kissed her. It was a wonderful kiss—the girl never forgot it.

By autumn she had arranged her affairs and was settled in a small apartment in New York. Her short stories brought her friends, and both the men and the women liked her. She liked them equally, though she felt more at her ease with the women—she had known very few men in her life.

It was at the house of one of her new friends that she met a poet whose work she had always disliked, though it had a certain fascination for her. His poems were cold and hard, with sudden touches of an almost cruel sensuality that made her think of a glowing coal cast into a bowl of ice. She saw him talking with the hostess before he entered the room. Neither his face nor his manner pleased her, and it seemed to her that in an unusual degree the man and his work were one. She was watching him intently when he turned, and across the intervening space, filled with men and women and the

* This was one of the few works of fiction by the woman who won renown in poetry.

sound of voices, their eyes met. A feeling of resentment that he should have divined her glance made her join hastily in the conversation of those near her. But she was deeply conscious of his presence, which seemed to pervade the room, and to call to her almost audibly. When he was presented to her at last, she felt that love was in her eyes, and she blushed. He enjoyed the blush and sat beside her. They talked of his poetry, and moment by moment she asked herself why she loved him. It was characteristic of her that she immediately acknowledged this love to herself, and characteristic of him that he knew of her love as soon as she felt it. She wanted to like his voice, but she found it monotonous and unsympathetic—the voice of a man who has given little to life, and who has ceased to expect much in return.

Intense women pleased him, and he asked if he might take her home. The hostess whispered, as she helped her on with her cloak, that he had never done such a thing before and that he seldom went any place. She blushed again, and the hostess kissed her. He had already made her like a child, yet she realized that he took her home because she loved him—not because he loved her.

That night she read his latest book of poems through before she went to bed. She did not like them any better than before. They should have been bound in black and scarlet, she thought. When she finished them she looked into the mirror for a long time, trying to see herself with his eyes. She was sorry that her hair was not "red gold." He must like that color since he had used it so much in his poems.

After that he came to see her once a week with chilling regularity, and sometimes took her to dinner or to the theater. The week revolved around the day when he came. Everything in her life existed for the few hours when she was with him. Sometimes he sent her a note or two between his visits. They came often enough to make her always impatient for the postman.

One day in late March they took a long walk together in the park. The branches under the cold sky were feathery with the promise of new leaves. It was dusk and the lights were lit. Standing on the Belvedere overlooking the reservoir, they could trace the walks and roadways by their lamps like bordering chains of amber. He was less somber than usual, for the first warm day had brought back the ghost of his youth and made him gently sentimental. He told her that he was forty-one. He thought that she would be surprised, and was piqued when she said simply, "You are twelve years older than I am." She

had thought him as old as that. Nothing that he had ever told her about himself surprised her. He had an uncomfortable feeling that she knew all of his weak points. She was too honest to flatter him, and he never had from her the boundless admiration that he craved. He was silent for a while, but the contrast of her fair skin and dark hair pleased him, as they always did, and he took her hand. Before she could draw it away, he felt a shiver run through her.

She had planned to go to Europe in the summer, but she let the weeks go by without engaging her passage, and ended by leaving the city for only a fortnight at the seashore. The fall and winter that followed were so much like the ones before that she sometimes wondered if the year had not slipped back. She tried to become interested in charity, and he listened with a bored politeness to her talk of Christmas trees and Christmas dinners.

In the spring, just as in the year before, a little wave of sentiment swept over him. He wrote verses to her, and even took the trouble to evolve a sonnet or two. But they never rang true, and the occasional touch of sensuality was so false a note that it hurt her. She knew that there was no passion in him. The battle between them was pitifully unequal, and when the little wave ebbed away again, his visits became evenly spaced as before.

In June she bought a small cottage at Ardeen in the Catskills. She wanted to be away from him—but not so far away as Europe. The voyage was postponed for still another year. With a methodical regularity he wrote to her twice a week, and when the letters came a tremulous happiness made her long to be friends with every living thing that she saw. The rest of the week existed only to bring the letter-days nearer. In spite of his lack of humor, he could talk well, if he were in a good mood, but his letters were uniformly brief and commonplace. They were like his stiff, regular handwriting.

When she came back to the city in September, he was at the station to meet her. She had not expected him, and when she saw him coming toward her in the crowd, a thrill of pain shot through her to the tips of her fingers. He took her hand and felt that it was cold through the thin summer glove. She found him looking at her critically. He was relieved to see that she loved him as much as ever. Her letters had been so light and whimsical that he had wondered if she might not have changed. He put her into a cab to drive home alone. She waited impatiently for her trunk, and when it came she took from it the package

of love-letters that she had written to him during the summer. She had never meant to have him read them. It was a little device to make the other letters easier for her. His look when he met her made her want to destroy them, and she put them on the ashes in the grate, and watched them smoke and blacken. It was the first autumn fire.

The monotonous weeks began revolving again around his visits. It was two years since she had met him, and she asked herself if this was the life that had waited for her. He came sometimes wet with rain and sometimes powdered with snow, and when three hours had passed he went out into the rain or into the snow, without a regret at leaving her. At Christmas the usual package of books came. Each one bore the greeting that he had written in his gifts of the years before. His way of repeating the same action week after week and year after year was maddening to her. She wondered what he had been fifteen years before. Had passion always been for him only a subject for art, a thing of his brain?

They walked together in the park when the days grew warmer at last. She would have been glad to escape the spring, but the seasons are pitiless and full of memories. One of their walks in the silvery May twilight brought them again to the Belvedere. In the great buildings that loomed far away over the trees, windows were lighted here and there. She saw them—the buildings were full of homes. He was absently watching the park lights change from amber to white as it grew darker. Neither of them spoke. When he turned toward her from the long chain of lights, he saw that she was crying without making a sound. A little wave of tenderness made him take her in his arms. He kissed her and his face was wet with her tears. Her mouth was convulsed with weeping. He half regretted that, and yet it made the sensation more novel. He kissed her again and again. She grew quiet, and he took off her glove and kissed the palm of her hand. It was damp against his lips. Suddenly she drew away from him and ran into the twilight. He hurried after her and took her arm, trying to speak to her as a lover would speak. But he saw that he failed. She seemed scarcely able to stand, but she walked on, looking straight before her and never speaking—not even when he left her at the door.

When she found herself in her room, she sat down on the bed to draw off her glove. She looked for a second at the palm of her hand, and then she laid it against her lips. It was a long time that she sat there. After several hours had passed, the tumult of her thoughts receded, leaving

one voice that had the insistence of a cry. She felt that life was possible to her only on one condition. At last she got up, turned on the light and found pencil and paper. She did not know what she was going to write, but after the first sentence there was no hesitation, and she wrote rapidly: "You know that I love you. Tomorrow morning I am going to my cottage at Ardeen on the early train. Come to me there. You need not stay long—only come to me. You will not have this letter until after I have gone, but you can take the second train. You will come—for a little while." She put the paper into the envelope, stamped it, sealed it, and directed it to him. Then she looked for her hat and jacket to take the letter to the post box. They were still on. She had not taken them off since she left him.

A boy carried her suit-case from the station at Ardeen to the cottage, and when they reached it, the cold, dead air of the closed house made her feel faint. She tried to open the window while the boy laid a fire, but she had to ask him to help her. At her order he went to get some provisions, and left her alone. She sat down in the chair before the fire. When he came back, she tried to eat a piece of bread from the loaf that he brought, but though she had eaten nothing since noon the day before, she could not swallow a morsel. Everything in the house was exactly as she had left it except for a delicate coating of dust. In a vase were strays of withered wild asters that she had forgotten in the fall. She looked up at the shelf where the clock had stood idly during all the winter. It had stopped at a ridiculous hour. She wound and set it, and it began to tick. She sat down again. The light fire had gone out. She watched the clock so closely that she could see the minute-hand move with little jerks. She was shivering, and she remembered a shawl that she had left in the cottage. It was in the bedroom. She went to the door and opened it a little way—then suddenly she turned as though she could not enter it, and came back to the black hearth.

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Like the swinging of a sword in the air, she heard the whistle of the train that had left the city at ten o'clock. She went to the window, though she knew it would take him twenty minutes to walk from the station. A feeling of terror took her. She could scarcely stand, and she went back to the chair. She put her hands over her eyes so that she would not look towards the window. Her heart was beating madly—

the throbs were like blows. She counted the ticks of the clock. They grew louder and louder until she felt that they were deafening her. By their terrible insistence they seemed to be measuring eternity. She felt that she had been counting them forever.

There was a step on the veranda—the heavy, hurried step of a man. She reached the door and opened it. An overgrown boy stood there with a telegram. It read:

"Sorry cannot accept your invitation. Sailing for Europe next week."

THE TEAR SQUEEZER

by Barry Benefield

ONE of the late afternoon commuters streaming across West Street toward the Chambers Street ferry that April afternoon was a fattish, fuzzy, short-legged young man with a long, peculiarly flat-tipped nose and a thin, brown beard trimmed affectedly to a Vandyke point. Abe Pittle was on his way from an insurance office on lower Broadway, where he was in the bookkeeping department, to Caldwell, N. J., where, with his wife Amelia and his daughter Alice, he occupied a stunted rented house, which he called his bungalow when speaking of it in the city. He was about to meet one of those tremendous trivialities that turn a life.

Abe was thirty-three years old, and his salary was eighteen dollars a week, to which he added six or seven by doing overtime. He had come originally from the country near Danbury, Conn., and his most abiding recollections of his home life were a paternal grandmother always harrying him for taking more butter than he needed, of his father threatening him for using too much sugar, of his mother weakly complaining that he wasted fully half of his meat by stripping out the lean and leaving the fat.

Inside the ferryhouse, Abe drew quickly away from the jostling crowd and began searching desperately through his pockets. For fear of extravagant impulses, he never brought to town more than thirty-five cents, for lunch and incidentals, unless there was something special to buy. He had meant to bring the money for a new commutation

ticket that morning, but he had forgotten it. Though he knew perfectly well that there was not nearly enough money in his pockets to buy a single fare ticket to Caldwell, yet his hands went on searching, his big white eyes staring in suspense.

An amiable old gentleman, one of that somewhat large number who eagerly hunt for the not too costly inward glow to be got by helping other people solve small difficulties, stepped out of the crowd.

"I know what's the matter," he said, smiling triumphantly. "I've had it happen to me more than once. You've lost your commutation ticket and you're short of change. Where do you go? No matter; a dollar will take you there, won't it?"

"Yes, but—"

"Don't waste time talking," interrupted the happy old gentleman. "We commuters must waste no time talking until we're safely in the train. You'll see me here again some afternoon; pay me back then."

He hurried on, and Abe took his place at the end of the line at the ticket office, flushed with gratitude, resolved to stand on watch at the ferryhouse every day until he repaid the dollar and thanked its lender. He wished he had had presence of mind enough to ask the old gentleman for his business card; then he could have sent the money by mail that night.

"Pretty fine, that's what I say," he kept repeating to himself all the way home on the train. He told his wife of the incident, reviewing his impressions of his benefactor's appearance that he might the better remember him. But all the time, up to the last minute before dropping off to sleep, Abe was dimly conscious that in the back part of his mind was a thought—not quite a hope, yet—that possibly he would never see the old gentleman again; and so he would have gotten a dollar for nothing.

Something for nothing! It was a radiant thought that always flooded his soul with joy. To bear home some article bought with tobacco or some trade coupons pleased his heart for days. The restaurant where he lunched was run on the honor system; the rush of noonday patrons helped themselves from the tables and shelves, declaring and paying their indebtedness on the way out. Abe understated his bill five or ten cents every day. As often as he dared he enrolled for over-time in the office at night and then dawdled, doing nothing; that was cheering. And to find money was a rare happening, perfect in its exquisite quality.

The next day Abe went to town supplied with money to buy a commutation ticket, and a dollar besides. At the ferryhouse, in the late afternoon crowd ahead of him, his benefactor's gray head appeared before his eyes, but they turned away quickly. When they looked back the gray head was out of sight. Abe swore to his wife that night that he had not seen that fine old gentleman, as she called him; Abe swore even to himself that he had not seen him. After that he hurried through the ferryhouse, staring at the advertisements on the walls or scanning the headlines of his newspaper.

The idea of that dollar for nothing remained with him. It was banished to the back part of his mind, the darkest part; but even there he warmed it, and it was sprouting; he felt that every day it was becoming more fixed, spreading out, producing branches that frightened yet fascinated him.

One night early in May, having enrolled for overtime in the office he stole an hour and went to the ferryhouse at nine o'clock. He sat down to wait for his boat. Suddenly standing up, he began searching frantically through his pockets until he attracted the attention of a man who sat near him, of whom he asked the loan of fifty cents.

Presently he was using this maneuver two or three times a week at the Chambers Street ferry. Then one of his victims called upon him for the return of a dollar, after which Abe spent five cents every day to ride up to the Twenty-third Street ferry, where he practised his new trick as often as he dared.

In July, the vacation period for the men in the insurance office having begun, Abe received the usual two weeks' pay in advance and was told to go and enjoy himself. It had been his custom to spend these vacations on the Jersey coast, where tents supplied with gas stoves and other housekeeping necessities could be rented by the week for a small amount.

At home that night Abe told his wife that his company had suffered some unusual losses and was giving only vacations without pay; he could not afford to take any at all; he would have to work straight through the season. Next year, though, they would have a rattling good vacation, he promised stoutly, whether the company paid for it or not. Alice cried all night with disappointment, for ten years sees little comfort at the tremendous distance marked by one-tenth of her whole past life. And at breakfast his large wife did not try to conceal

her contempt for the inefficiency of a man who could not manage a two weeks' vacation once a year.

Though Abe had to get up every morning and return to New York to fulfill his falsehood, yet he could not go near the office. At night he worked the lost-ticket trick at the ferryhouses along the Hudson; the time between early morning and late afternoon he spent loafing in the parks. It was dull, but he was getting a little something for nothing, and that in addition to the thirty-six dollars of vacation money from the office.

After two or three days it occurred to him that he ought not to waste eight hours, and he went to the Grand Central Station to study how to adapt the lost-ticket trick for use there so as to fill in profitably the eight empty hours. It was easy.

In the daytime he oscillated between the Grand Central and the Pennsylvania Stations; in the late afternoon he operated at all the ferries used by commuters. Sometimes the original theme of the lost ticket was varied, but the outline was always the same. There was ever a pressing necessity to get to another city and a lack of money, due to sickness or loss or some other sudden stroke of ill luck that might befall anybody.

On the Saturday before the Monday when he was to return to the insurance office Abe accomplished a feat that thrilled him. Up to that time he had never got more than two or three dollars from one person. Going to a telegraph booth in the Grand Central Station, he wrote out the following telegram to himself, dating it from Chicago: "Alice is dying and calling for papa. Come quick.—Amelia." Dropping it on the floor and stepping on it to make it appear much handled, he put it in his pocket folded and sank down despairingly on a seat by a man he shrewdly guessed to be a Westerner.

It was an inspiration on Abe's part to write his own daughter's name, for as he dwelt upon the idea of her dying and calling vainly for him his eyes moistened; and when he pulled out the telegram, opened it and began reading it he fell easily into tears, presently rising to the achievement of an audible sob.

"What's wrong, bud?" asked the Westerner.

Abe simply handed him the message, mumbling through his tears: "My baby. Lost my pocketbook in the subway on the way down here. Pickpocket, I guess."

Out of that he realized thirty dollars. In his two weeks he had gotten in a hundred and fifty dollars more money than he had ever made in his life within so short a time, and almost all for nothing. To soothe his sense of shame, which was aroused more by the size of his takings than by their nature, Abe told himself that his operations were in the nature of a vacation lark, and that on Monday he would go back to work.

On Monday, however, he did not go back to the office. He simply could not bring himself to desert a field whose products so nearly approximated the perfect principle of all for nothing. He continued to cultivate the field assiduously, coming to town early in the morning and often not returning home until late at night, when he explained to his wife that he had been doing overtime at the office. He was working harder, he said, in order to make sure that they could have a first class vacation the following summer whether the office paid for it or not. His wife was very proud of him, and was zealously tender in attending to all his wants at home.

In September a railroad detective in the Grand Central Station, who had been watching Abe for some time, arrested him for begging; and the police magistrate, being told that a bankbook showing deposits of over a thousand dollars had been found on him, sentenced him to a month in the workhouse under the assumed name of Samuel Gardiner.

Sam, alias Abe, saw his position not without comforting aspects. He would get a month's board free, for he would escape work somehow; and he wrote to his wife that he was about to lose his job, that he was discouraged, and that by the time the letter reached her he would be at the bottom of the East River. "Kiss little Alice good-bye for me," he concluded. He wept over that. And yet, when he should return from Blackwell's Island, there would be only himself to support. A turnkey mailed the letter for him.

The month in the workhouse took out what little poison there was left in the sting of the beggar's profession, and the new Sam came out with his mind made up to get all he could for nothing. It was necessary, however, to find new fields, the railroad stations and ferries having become too dangerous for constant cultivation.

Sam had studied that question in his leisure. Already he had learned that men, as a rule, are most generous after meals, because the physical exhilaration arising from the first flush of the filtering food brings with it an increase of amiability. He had learned, too, that an affected

frankness and simplicity works powerfully on men. Three or four chophouses on and near Broadway constituted his new territory. His speech was always the same, and always accompanied by a plaintive, placating smile:

"One moment, sir, please. I won't tell *you* a lie; I see I couldn't fool you, sir, so I won't stall. I'm simply dying for a slug of plain old booze—that's all. I was— But you don't want to hear a hard luck story, and I don't blame you. God! I just want the booze!"

The chophouses paid well after dinner, but for breakfast and lunch they were almost barren. Then the men came out in a great hurry to go about their business; they were not often sufficiently relaxed to listen to even his cunningly abbreviated tale. To supplement his income he added the department stores to his field.

Returns there, however, were unexpectedly small; for though the women gave more frequently than the men, they gave such disproportionately small amounts,* and that notwithstanding the fact that his labor with them was long and arduous. A simple affectation of frankness with them was futile; several times he tried the drink story on shoppers, and they were horrified and harsh. The husky throat, the brimming eye, the complicated lie, these were the tiresome tools he had to use upon their purses.

But even these two complementary fields could not contain the new Sam's ambition for long. Very few shoppers come to town before ten o'clock, so he waylaid clerks, stenographers and salesgirls coming out of the busy downtown subway stations in the early hours. Moreover, there was little to be got at the chophouses after the dinner period, so he cultivated the restaurants that do a heavy business after the theater. There was almost no work in his regular fields on Sunday, so he added the churches to his territory.

Most savings banks fix a limit beyond which they will not pay interest on deposits. The limit of Sam's bank was three thousand dollars, and before Christmas he had started an account in a second bank. Throughout the fall the fattish little father had been promising himself to sacrifice a day in a trip to Caldwell in the hope of seeing Alice, of hearing her laugh perhaps. He loved her tiny, gurgling laugh. But no day having come in the fall that he felt he could give up, he had postponed his hope until the winter holidays.

Starting the second bank account, however, seemed so to increase the value of the days to him, and Christmas brought so many additional

A pair of black goggles, a tin cup, a hand organ some twelve inches square from a junk shop, and a little tin sign to hang from around his neck down on his chest saying, "Sightless Sam," these completed his equipment. Removing one side of the organ, he stuck several holes in the bellows to still further weaken it, and so tampered with the rest of the machinery that it gave forth but two notes, one high and one low, which sounded like a ghostly scream and a ghostly groan from a bottomless pit.

The first day Sam went forth in his new part was filled with such tremendous adventure that he felt sick at the stomach and tremulous in the legs; for, besides the time he might lose, or almost lose, the equipment had cost over six dollars, more than half of which he must sacrifice if he resold it. And he was now worth only a little more than fifty thousand dollars.

But even the first day was a nerve-racking success; and he settled down to meet the years as "Sightless Sam." It did not seem to him that his new system could possibly be improved upon in this grim world of merely approximate happinesses.

In the mornings he squatted on the pavement in the financial districts, desperately turning out of the tiny organ the ghostly scream and the ghostly groan. In the mature day hours he waylaid shoppers on Broadway and Sixth Avenue. In the night hours he moved uptown into the zone of diners and theatergoers.

Now there was no running about, no weeping, no standing in strained attitudes, no accosting of people in a hurry, no rebuffs to wound a tender heart. He simply sat, looking down, apparently in deep dejection, but really at his fascinating flat-tipped nose; or looking up in staring, mute appeal, turning the organ crank; frequently emptying the coins from the cup lest it become discouragingly full.

It is true he still had to turn a crank, and though it required little work to do that, yet it had the appearance of labor. This, however, did not at first occupy his mind enough to embitter him; in the beginning he largely waved it aside except when he was depressed.

And yet his artist soul could not be deceived and drugged into quietude by a partial success. There was no blinking the fact that he still had to turn the crank of the little organ. He studied hard year after year how to eliminate that last impediment in the way of the working of the perfect principle of all for nothing. After ten futile years he discovered what he sought, and that not through logic and psychology,

but through an accident, as so many important discoveries have been made.

After theater hours uptown Sam usually walked down Sixth Avenue to his room in Greenwich Village to save carfare. Below Greeley Square, in a dingy side street, was then the Horseshoe, the largest, the most skillfully managed, the best protected and the most long-lived of New York's older dance halls; surrounded by obscure "hotels" in that and other unsavory side streets. The doors opened at eight P.M. and closed at three A.M., promptly.

One night after twelve o'clock Sam walked down Sixth Avenue, turned into the Horseshoe street and stood for some time on the sidewalk opposite the dance hall, watching the door. Men and women, individually, were constantly going into the place; men and women in couples were constantly coming out of it. Every time the inner door, beyond the vestibule, opened and closed, it cut off and left outside a quivering slice of tinkling music and babbling laughter.

Here, then, even after midnight, were many gay people and much liveliness. Sam put on his black goggles, pounded his way across the street with his stick, sat down on the sidewalk at the vestibule under the emblem that gave the place its felicitous name and began grinding out the ghostly scream and the ghostly groan.

At first he used this stand only after midnight, but it paid so well that he appeared at the Horseshoe ahead of the vanguard of regulars, and left only after the doorkeeper, the bouncer, the musicians and the waiters had gone home. At first, too, he generously ground out the organ's full two notes, but one night three quaint young revelers paid him twenty dollars for the organ and took it away in a hansom, which was otherwise heavily loaded.

Sam could not get his immediate consent to spend perhaps a dollar for another battered organ, and so the next night he sat under the horseshoe with his cup on one knee and a bunch of lead pencils on the other. His receipts suffered no losses. Moreover, a week's average was quite up to a week with the organ. Sam was astounded. Here, then, it was not necessary to attract attention with a pathetic noise; his "sightless" eyes did the work with these abandoned women and their reckless companions.

Thinking afterward of his discovery, Sam could not help being sometimes in great pain when he considered the labor he had lost; but he was, for the most part, a cheery optimist, and he preferred to

look gladly forward to the joyous future with the pencils, rather than sourly back at the dark past with the organ. The bunch of pencils became his only histrionic property. He never again turned a crank, nor heard the ghostly screams and ghostly groans struggling from the battered little black box and sinking unheeded through his ears.

After a year at the Horseshoe, Sam began to suspect what the fat bakery woman's wink had meant when she had said that Alice Pittle was in New York and in the theatrical business. One of the Horseshoe sisterhood, who had just begun to make that hall her nightly headquarters, possessed a thick, throaty, gurgling little laugh that awakened dim old associations in Sam when he first heard it. His mind played fearfully around the possibility, which was fast growing toward certainty, but he was afraid to talk to her openly about either himself or her; she was already a recklessly generous giver, and he was unwilling to disturb a status quo that included her rich tips.

Sam came to be an institution at the Horseshoe. After a while he brought a canvas-covered stool with him; and when it was wet or cold outside, the proprietor permitted him to sit inside the vestibule, thus purchasing for himself at a little price from this convenient bank of magnanimity an unusual kind of glowing feeling for himself.

Sam developed several subsidiary sources of revenue. One of them was selling cocaine to the "sniffers" among the open-hearted sisterhood that walked under the horseshoe. Another was an ingenious trick of petty blackmail. Knowing them all by their "Christian" names, or by the names they had assumed, as well as the number of years they had been coming to the dance hall, he called them Tessie No. Three or Polly No. Five, advancing the numbers as time went by, unless they paid to hold time back. It was a great joke—but not a rare one—among the habitués who were in the secret to hear "Sightless Sam" address someone in his insinuating whine as Grace No. Ten, for instance.

They say that New Yorkers rarely see the sky; but by tilting his head back against the vestibule, and turning it slightly, Sam could raise his eyes above the elevated track out on Sixth Avenue; and out beyond that, beyond the Hudson River, above the State where he had once lived, he could see the stars through the black goggles. One night in April, as he sat thus staring, a plump, blonde little woman stopped by the stool and sat down on the edge of the vestibule floor that projected a few inches over the sidewalk.

"April is the swell month, ain't it, Sam?" she said. "Then you kind of breathe in the trees and flowers. But it sort of makes me blue."

"Does it, Edith No. Five?" asked Sam, emphasizing the numeral. For though he was still adrift among the goggle-dimmed stars, yet he was ready to attend to Edith's case at once. He remembered distinctly when she had come; she had been walking under the horseshoe two weeks over five years; and she had not paid up this year. He had already whispered the threatening "No. Five" at her several times without avail. He meant to have his customary generous gift from her upon the passing of a new year or know the reason why.

She paid no attention, apparently, to his threatening numeral; she sat silently staring out across the street, her chin in her hands. Assuming his most humble, most oily, most sympathetic tone—the tone he always employed when he wanted to trap a downhearted girl into giving him intimate confidences to be used later for petty black-mailing purposes—Sam spoke at the small plump blonde, not looking around:

"Well, Edith No. Five, summer will be here pretty soon. I suppose when it gets hot you'll go away for a while—and see your folks—the old folks at home, maybe."

"I haven't any folks, Sam."

"Dead?" The goggled little beggar smiled behind his hand.

"Yes, Sam, dead. It was kind of funny, too—my father and mother died the same day. He lost his job, got the blues and jumped into the river. He wrote my mother he was going to do it; and the shock killed her; her heart was weak, anyhow, though she did take a lot of patent medicines for it a long time."

Sam didn't say anything for a while. Then he asked:

"And how did you make out after that? Was that the reason you got into this business?"

"Partly, I guess, Sam. One of the neighbors out there in Caldwell—that's where we lived—took me in and made a sort of cheap servant out of me as long as I would stand for it, and then—aw, cut it out, Sam; don't try to make me tell you the sto-hory of me life. I wouldn't let you make any money off me on that, anyhow. If you knew all the sad sto-hory of me, Sam, I wouldn't pay you a nickel not to tell anybody you saw."

She laughed jokingly, poked him in the ribs, and he heard the rustle of her dress as she rose.

"Wait a minute, Alice Pittle," he called in a low, confidential, grieving voice, now turning on his stool to look at her through his goggles. "Wait just a minute, Alice; I want to tell you something."

"How the hell did you know my name was Alice? Aw, well, that don't make no difference. But I'm curious to know how you got it. How? Did some of my dear lady frien's squeal on me to you?"

"Bend your head down and I'll whisper to you, Alice." One of the cabdrivers standing nearby on the edge of the curb called over at her: "Stop that flirtin' with Sam, Edith. He's a dead one."

"I know your name," whispered Sam into the ear at his mouth, "because I named you. I am your father. Something got the matter with my eyes, I lost my job and had to take up this business. Yes, I'm your pore old father, Alice."

She had straightened up suddenly. He felt her looking him up and down. And then her scrutiny concentrated on his long, flat-tipped nose. Would she remember that? Except for his long schooling in maintaining a patiently gloomy countenance, he could not have helped smiling. She bent down to him again.

"Sam, you're a dirty old liar. A joke's a joke, but, believe me, you old faker, this is crowdin' it too far."

Laughing, she went on into the Horseshoe. But on her way home that night, she stopped by his stool and bent over him.

"How much to forget it, Sam?"

He knew that she knew, and he knew that she was ashamed of him. He hesitated to think a minute, to calculate how much she was ashamed.

"Ten dollars a week," he answered in his saddest, huskiest little voice.

She slipped it into his hand, and hurried away.

She continued paying him ten dollars a week as long as she lived, which was for four years, during which time he never mentioned his relationship again. After she was gone he did miss her thick, throaty, gurgling laughter floating in and out through the Horseshoe door, and he also missed the ten dollars a week.

One night a runaway cab horse dashed up on the sidewalk and trampled Sam to death. His body was saved from potter's field by the charity of the Horseshoe sisters, who wept over him. It was later discovered that the Abe Pittle estate aggregated some half-million dollars. No will was found, nor any heir.

THE RURAL SOUL

by Thomas Beer

I

TWENTY years ago when Sunday supplements had begun the pollution of my intelligence, there was a spasm of journalized science which upset and distressed me. Some native wizard had uncovered strata in Montana or elsewhere which would feed the world. The mud had all the necessary qualities. I recall a caption of "Three Pills a Day" and sketches of a neat factory disgorging capsules. The children of earth were to be fed directly from their mother's bosom; groceries and dairies would cease; one turned a crank and crammed a dozen nutritive qualities into a glycerine cover. Joy and digestion would reign and the dining-room table would vanish.

It was that sort of tosh. I took it in the spirit of pure faith and was alarmed for the six or seven farmers whose land lay visible from my grandfather's veranda in central Ohio. I was peculiarly afflicted for a certain Schintzelein. He had charming lithographed views of Hell in his parlor and his wife made cakes full of aniseed. Well, he survives and nothing came of the nonsense. It offers, though, the plot of a novel in the Wells-Flammarion tradition. Imagine the rustics of America embattled upholding mutton and cauliflower as righteous diet against this chemical bolus, wild cattle plunging through the streets of Chicago, an orgy of meat-eaters in a deserted restaurant, the farmer *contra mundum*.

This forgotten excitement recovered itself somewhere and woke in my brain lately when a cattle breeder savagely flung a challenge into some Midland impapyrate row. Suppose the farmers stopped farming? Then what would the capitalists and other oppressors do? An editor jauntily answered with the aforetime wizard's prophecy. Science would feed the world, somehow, and the farmer could go to the devil, taking his crops and complaints along with him. Pricked on by jaundice or another splenetic ailment, he chose to add that the farmer, coolly considered, was a nuisance and a deterrent to the advance of culture. The outbreak interested me by its quantum of chill truth. The farmer, as he exists, is a nuisance. Something should be done about it. Nothing can be. But he should be listed together with bad novels, government,

Cyprian maladies and the other irritations not yet erased from the slovenly progress of organic evolution.

He is, of course, a coward. He usually knows this and sometimes admits it. His posture is that of the small boy who has fluked a first attempt at tennis and stands bouncing a ball against a fence, insisting that he's found a superior sport. In philosophical patter, he enriches an inferior employment by a set of suitable assertions. In plain English, he brags of a simple feat in self-defense. The kid goes back to tennis, presently. The farmer sticks to his mire because, firstly, it is profitable, and secondly, because generations of poets, statesmen and like liars have smeared the business in saccharine. He sits horribly impregnable in a fortress of misplaced adjectives taunting the world with his nobility, disinterest and sacrifice. Meanwhile, he knows his lifework is puerile, envies the rest of us and frequently loathes himself with such vigor that he flies to spend his old age in turmoil and bawdry, in Los Angeles, Paris and Palm Beach. This passes as earned repose. It is nothing but escape.

His cowardice makes him the prey of words, as every skilled evangelist knows. The hound of heaven howls waverers up to repentance and profession in sentences without meaning. They wobble, unwilling to resign anything prohibited after the Sixth Commandment. They stagger in a mist of vowels, lurch forward into a pool and wake respectable, drenched, deprived of women, home brew, dice and the subtler pleasures of malice. Having got into the mess, they either drag others down or become hypocrites by habit. The latter is the easier, more general course.

Having much observed it, I decline any title of credence as to the solid nature of rural religious feeling. An accident once offered me the whole show in a compact apotheosis.

It happened in Arkansas. Returning from the races at Hot Springs, with other sinners, our driver followed the wrong road and we landed in the middle of a revival. It was an effect for George Bellows, for Daumier, for Hogarth. The revivalist was about his task under a canopy still lettered with the title of some decayed circus. Oil flared and stunk and lit up an epicycle of persimmon trees which took on an unhallowed seeming of painted tin. Bored children lay asleep against the edge of the light. Lank women cooked food over subdued fires and gossiped, studying skirts sidelong. Knots drifted toward the bawling

apostle, now and then, and sometimes one caught the infection, plunged on to grace and came back redeemed for a fried chicken leg.

Meantime, the circumference was curiously alive. Under the per-simmons, comfortably remote from God's spokesman, bottles were glittering. There was talk of orange pop mixed with alcohol as substitute for legitimate red licker. Soldiers had strayed over from Camp Pike and mixed hopefully with the herd. Eyes shimmered under incredible female hats. Incredible jests were tossed and fell fruitfully among adolescents gathered in the name of virtue. Arrangements were made with incredible speed. Couples moved off and were, I am glad to say, lost in the shadows. It was most instructive. I explained to my companion, a French captain, that this was a religious assembly. He seemed surprised.

II

Rural virtue is and, I suspect, always has been a farce. Seated at the kitchen range of my battery in Texas, I noted that when the brawny lads of the corn-belt took a jolt of lemon extract and started individual sagas, the urban recruits fell into awed, envious silence. Amazement took the fauns and satyrs collected from Broadway, Clark Street and Euclid Avenue. Rather later, when wronged women presented themselves at my adjutantal desk in a Division Headquarters, I found a backing for the recitals. The reasons why Private Olsen or Corporal Cooper should directly marry the affiant so often included mention of wheatfields, hickory groves and corncribs that I haven't been able to pass such bits of scenery since without an uneasy blush. And, in France, censoring letters, I never wondered when the men wrote to younger brothers in Missouri that Gascony was a dull, prim and resourceless territory.

Virtue, in American terms, is mostly a theory of continence. I take it that the farmer is the least continent of men, married or single. He is candidly avaricious and glories in the fact. The *Unpopular Review* once pointed out that the percentage of crime in farming districts is much greater than in cities, in proportion. Why can't an act of Congress or a straw vote compel the rustic to come down and be human? I weary of his purity.

The difficulty is with the women. I fancy that women have a larger fondness for the lies they tell, although they never come to believe

them as men do. So much of their early life is passed in dissimulation that they settle, after marriage, into sheer artistry. The farm-wife has an awful job, anyhow. She must convince her children that their lot is desirable when she knows that they know it isn't. She must preach the virtues of their father, when his brats communing with brats at swimming-holes and behind henhouses know him for a hollow fraud. She must bolster the conceit of her sons by assuring them that it is a noble and intricate task to heave manure about, to plow, to milk when, at the age of ten, they've learned to do these things competently without any expense in thought. So she wants the pay of her slavery, the satisfaction of seeing her perjuries revered and applauded, the joy of condemning metropolises, the right to brag.

Thus, the journal which withdrew reports of a current and jolly action in divorce from its rural edition had to put them back forthwith. The women of the raisin pie belt rose shrieking against the deprivation. They would hear of Mrs. X, her raiment, the putative bastardy of her baby or they would take another paper. Thus the movie makers circulate legends of life among the wicked rich, cabarets without roofing, dinner parties where naked wenches rise through fountains of champagne, frustrated rapes in impossible boudoirs, virgins shedding their tinselled robes and staggering home to the farm and the embraces of their mothers, country lads foiling the vile city boss. Indeed, if anyone has fully gauged the cynicism of the farmer female, it is the movie king.

Cynical she is. And on that quality proceeds much of the political debauchery of the midlands. Having no trust in the men around her, she develops an inner necessity, not at all obscure. There must be, somewhere, a model man. If he appears, she worships him and usually forces him on her male associates by mere weight of lip service. Take the case of Bryan. Spellbinders and pressmen have represented his first beginnings as a triumph. It is supposed that he moved from County Fair to High School Commencements spilling words and always, everywhere, capturing suffrage.

It isn't so. He operated in a region where enough of the sane animalism of the frontier lingered to make his path pebbly. The men chuckled a great deal. The women, though, marked him for a hero. He had charms—a coarse, severe, but indubitable beauty, the terrific masculine promise of his percussive baritone, comprehensible dress. He was good, pure, averse to liquor and cards and things like that. He addressed the

women of his audiences with flatteries that would choke a Nilotic dragoman. Lads grew to voting age in the perfume of his name, sighed by their mothers, aunts and sisters. In 1896 all this musky seething came to fearful flower. If he hadn't grown old and plump . . . but that is by the way.

Formerly starved for the moulded jellies of Art, the farmwife is now supplied. The movies cater to her. She has magazines vowed to her ideals in *belles lettres*, in portraiture, in philosophy. This has worked a reverse. Our tradition is that Mother begs the pence for Ella's music lessons, bullies the funds out of Father for Edwin's year on Montmartre, copies Stanley's MS. I have strictly examined a dozen young talents on the point and find that, in every case, it was the old man who supplied the final shekels necessary to the flight of genius. Mamma was the reluctant figure in the tale. The overalled parent was willing. Mother wanted them safe at home. Was there not a phono-cabinet stocked with Caruso's records and jazz? Wasn't there a bookshelf? Hadn't Sally bedroom chintz curtains just like those in the most authentic movies? Well, why mix with the painted mob that creates these toys?

Alas, poor brood mare! Perhaps it is, after all, only the stallions that understand the lure of that iridescent fallow where the Muses cavort with the colts and fillies. There is, of course, a baser admixture of envy in the pain. There is always the high dread. The Medusa will freeze a circle in their eyes. Returning, they will not see her as they did. At the end they will pity a trifle and she will know that last, least supportable misery. Why wonder that she tries to credit Heaven?

At the end, she is most piteous, and her man with her. They have given their days to a vain thing, a double dance before a tarnished mirror. He has passed his life in cruelty to a soil which gave without argument. He has been a butt. She has stayed his manhood with her sympathy and toils. And then? A final simulation of arrogance, neurotic hectorings of hired folk or a helpless, degraded sweetness and humility. They sit and stare. One hopes, after the long sweat, they seldom clearly see. Their portion was with the beasts. Their own hands kept them so.

THE HISTORY OF A PRODIGY

by Lewis Mumford

I

I DREAMED about Tempe's baby long before it was born; indeed, long before anyone knew who the baby's father would be. It was manifest from the way that Tempe used to fondle cats, stroke little ornaments, and cuddle the urchins on the street who mistook her for a moving picture star whose name has long vanished from the screen—it seemed plain, I say, from these little indications that Tempe would some day espouse motherhood—joyfully.

This is not to imply that she was the sort of stolid, capacious-bosomed girl whom one usually characterizes as "motherly." In those days—what a long time back a decade seems!—Tempe was the embodiment of lithe, mischievous, spirited girlhood, and as the cabarets were having a great vogue and the tango was vanishing reluctantly before the fox-trot, she gave herself over desperately to a round of parties, dances, teas, suppers, and automobile excursions with the miscellaneous riff-raff that dropped into our studio. In 1910 Tempe was one of three models I used to illustrate Haddon Richard's serial, "The Battered Moth," and she towered above the other two girls for the reason that Tempe was Tempe, and not merely a model.

To say that Tempe was Tempe is to say that she was a prodigy. I had been acquainted with her, in a casual, friendly way, since her childhood, and I never knew of anyone who combined so many disconcerting excellences. Her beauty, even at the age of ten, was something I prefer not to describe: there is an early portrait by Sir Whiteing Wendy at the Corcoran Gallery in Washington, in his habitual Gainsborough manner, and at the other extreme, much later in date, is my series of cover designs and illustrations, chiefly for the *Megalopolitan Magazine*, which portray her after she had budded into adolescence. In spite of Sir Whiteing's densely opulent background and my own infernal superficiality, there is no mistaking Tempe's unique loveliness; and a certain freshness you will find in my portrayal of the July Tennis Girl, the August Swimming Girl, and the September Canoeing Girl derives from the fact that she had a furious capability at all of these sports. Never could I scrutinize Tempe's physique without recalling

some lines of Whitman about a splendid motherhood: one felt that, adequately mated, a new race of gods might issue from her womb. Her constitution was of granite, and many a morning she came into my studio to pose for the better part of a day with open eyes whose perfect violet clarity concealed the fact that she had slept for perhaps three hours the night before.

Why Tempe should have preferred to be a model instead of continuing as an actress I have never been quite able to fathom. Ever since the age of five she had been in the public gaze, and I suppose that had a great deal to do with it. Back in 1905 she was the leading child actress in Sir William Kirkie's "The Way to Wonderland." This was her last engagement prior to the wise retirement from the stage that punctuated her growing period. Some time when she was fifteen, she once told me, the late Mr. Charles Frohman had addressed a letter to her mother in which he offered to take Tempe back again under his wing and push her to the front of Broadway with all possible speed. In her fear of being forced back into a profession she had come to loathe, Tempe had become criminally desperate, and had opened and read and finally burned this portentous letter, and a subsequent note of inquiry, before her mother had a chance to get hold of either.

Tempe's mother, a softly aggressive woman, with a tendency to cackle, was hugely proud of her daughter's career, and when one visited their home, as one occasionally did (for, after all, Tempe was Tempe!), one noted that reminiscences, photographs, or clippings were strictly taboo in Tempe's presence. Tempe hated her past with an intensity that caused one no little curiosity, and she kept it buried with an assiduity one could not possibly mistake for sham. It was only the happy accident of her occasional absence that gave her mother the opportunity to impart to me any of Tempe's history.

Tempe's excellences were not merely physical. She composed verse that had a tinkling charm which Henry Cuyler Bunner might have envied, and her drawings—for she drew, too—showed a talent that was at least susceptible of cultivation. As a child her mind was swift, accurate, and forthright. Her mother had had a theory about withholding from her the smattering of A B C's that is imparted to children at a tender age, and lo and behold! she had actually learned to read and spell by deciphering, through tenacious questioning, the big-lettered advertisements that she encountered in street cars and billboards.

That was Tempe all over in the days when I knew her best; an eager,

restless, prying, insatiably adventurous creature, as intractable as a filly that has never felt the bit in her mouth—a perpetual challenge to all that was stodgy and settled and respectable. Before she was eighteen she had been engaged to be married at least four times, to my knowledge, so keen was her desire to experiment; and each engagement was finally broken, so fearful was she, apparently, that her period of experiment might come to an end.

II

I must not make believe that Tempe retained through the decade that followed her turn into adolescence all the qualities for which I have given evidence, in their pristine state. The endless round of distractions into which she threw herself—a hectic life as she herself used to call it—had the inevitable effect of making her a little hard and perhaps more than a little superficial. Her cleverness became a sort of patter; she grew glib, and her mind became more and more circuitous: in short, she told lies. Her lies were usually attempts to reconcile the high premises upon which she conducted her friendships with the rough affronts she delivered them from day to day. With me she developed a very jolly comradeship indeed, and we used to tramp around the city occasionally, when the day's work was done, and talk about all sorts of abstruse matters for hour upon hour—there was a time when we read Plato together!—but more than once she threw over an engagement with me for the sake of (I am using her own pat words again) a more hectic evening.

Perhaps Mr. Owen Johnson had Tempe in mind when he wrote "The Salamander," a popular novel that was talked about during that sex craze we had a few years ago. At any rate, Tempe was a sort of salamander in the closing days of this period, and some of us wondered whether she would get married or—burnt. As a matter of fact, she passed through the whole round of experience physically unscathed, but for the fact that she developed scales. Alas! I grieve to confess that she developed spiritual scales.

There was an interval when her face became a little drawn and strained and white, and she rouged too heavily and talked too volubly in order, as it were, to cover it up—and shortly after that her engagement was announced in the usual copper-plate and starched paper.

The event was a shock, for all our guesses had gone wrong. I had conceived that Tempe might, in a fit of compassion, run away with

some poor devil of a serious artist to live for a while in an attic off Fourth Street, or that she might, as a relief from the basically penurious life she was leading, fasten herself in wedlock temporarily to some more or less vacuous millionaire. Tempe did neither; her fiancé was an earnest young business man who practised physical culture, read the *Saturday Evening Post*, and thought that womanhood ought to be protected.

When the marriage took place I was spending a preoccupied year in Nevada. I got back to discover that Tempe had accompanied her husband to Pittsburgh (of all places!) and had taken up residence in one of those hard and bright little suburbs on the Ohio River which shine like occasional diamonds in the long chain of cinders that stretches along the banks. At intervals I wrote her amiable, discursive letters, and the silence with which they were greeted only plagued me to repeat them. Then at last she wrote me a spear-headed little note in which she reminded me of her marriage and insisted that, while she still held me in the highest regard, she could not carry on a correspondence of which her husband, she was sure, would disapprove. The only thing about this note that reminded me of Tempe was the handwriting, and even that was a little changed.

I rationalized my chagrin by developing a series of corrosive witticisms on the general theme of marriage. And presently I forgot Tempe, except to wonder about her babies. The suburban life she had embraced was manifestly favourable to babies.

III

So nine years passed. I made calculations and allowances, and decided that Tempe must have at least four children. Curiously, I heard nothing which permitted me to correct my figures until one day this spring Hilliard Brown, the automobile designer, stopped me in front of the Library and asked me whether I had heard that Tempe was in town.

"I met her by accident," he explained. "She asked after you and said perhaps you would like to see her."

I have nothing important to tell about our meeting. Tempe was not present, even in the flesh. In her stead was a tall woman of some thirty-two, with a blank face whose babyish outlines only heightened the effects of her age. There was an improvised crib in the sitting room of her mother's flat, and a little six-months-old child whose blue eyes were filled with serious amazement was uneasily sitting up in it. The

baby charitably distracted my attention from Tempe—from the person who used to be Tempe—for the greater part of my visit, and I hope I managed to conceal the shock of disillusion with a show of idiotic geniality. Some lingering fragment of the old Tempe must have caught the shadow of disappointment in my eyes, however, for she made one or two essays at explanation.

"I have become quite calm and reserved," she said, "not wild, the way I used to be. James and I have a lovely house that overlooks the Ohio, not far from the golf links; I draw a great deal; and of course we have a car. James isn't artistic, you know, and the car is quite a bond between us. Now we have the baby. We really didn't need a baby: James is very steady and he likes his home. The baby is a dear, but somehow I cannot get enthusiastic about him."

"He's a very lively and intelligent little beggar," I hazarded.

"Yes," answered Tempe, "but I hope he won't get too intelligent. I don't want him to be an infant prodigy."

Tempe's mother, who has had many disappointments, and who was never reconciled to Tempe's mediocre marriage, said something caustic about the impossibility of rearing a prodigy from such parents. "He really can't help being stupid," said Tempe's mother to me, with a smile in which raillery played second fiddle to truth. Tempe's eyes narrowed and her face became hard?

"Oh, I hope he *will* be stupid," Tempe exclaimed. "I want him to be—*quite stupid*."

When I left I wondered whether it was the old Tempe or the new Tempe that had uttered this wish.

THE REGENERATE

by Maxo de la Roche

NINE o'clock brought the gasoline launch panting eagerly across the channel at Pointe au Baril, and at sight of it the lazy groups on the wharf broke into anxious activity.

Men, wearing yellow oilskin jackets and aggressively unshaven faces, hurried here and there, collecting their bait, their cooking utensils, and their Indian guides, who regarded the scene with good-

natured tolerance, only now and then indulged in smothered laughter as some over-zealous fisherman plunged by, laden with paraphernalia.

In the midst of this cheerful bustle Lee Meredith tripped down the wharf, rustling in her crisp blue linen frock. She approached a weather-beaten old Kentucky colonel appealingly.

"Oh, Colonel Woods!" she cried, "I am in such misfortune! Papa has one of his attacks this morning—the fried salmon yesterday, I think—and he absolutely refuses to enter a boat today. This is our last day. It is so disappointing. Colonel"—she lowered her voice in liquid cajolery—"dear, good colonel, is there a wee bit of room in your boat for a poor orphan? Papa says you are such an old friend he will trust me with you, if you are willing."

It would have taken a harder heart than the one that beat under the colonel's old gray sweater to resist the pleading of Lee's blue eyes.

"Dear young lady," he said, tucking her arm through his, "the honor is all mine. We shall have the biggest catch in the party. Hi!" to a group of young men, "hide your heads, you young chaps! Miss Meredith has chosen me as her escort for the day."

"Who is the chaperon, you frivolous young things?" demanded one of them.

"Our friend Nanabosh, to be sure," replied the colonel, indicating him with a wave of the hand. "Who could be giddy with John at the helm?"

John Nanabosh was the best guide in Pointe au Baril. He knew the deep waters of the Georgian Bay better than any other Indian; the haunts of the wily and plump black bass, the channels where the salmon raced, and the quiet rivers where the sturgeon lay. He was taciturn as a Dutchman and independent as a millionaire, but he and the old colonel were fast friends and had fished together for eight seasons with unvarying good-luck.

It was ill for the ambitious fisherman to whom John took a dislike. Many a one had he rowed all day long with tireless fat arms while the unsuspecting victim put out his trolling line and drew it in with blistering fingers.

"Huh!" John would grunt sympathetically, "fish no bite today. Storm comin'."

But if the object of his dislike were a stranger to the lakes, John would let him catch pike, and grunt admiringly as he hauled in their big, limp bodies. Great was the joy of the fisherman as he climbed

stiffly out of his boat at the wharf and proudly indicated his catch, and great indeed was his chagrin when he discovered how lightly the pike were valued.

"Why, great Scott!" the initiated would declaim scornfully, "there's more sport in that little bass," holding up a two-pounder, "than in your whole bally mess o' pike. Give them to your guide, man, and keep away from that hole in future!"

Then John Nanabosh would paddle away, the bow of his canoe weighed down with pike, which he would sell for a cent a pound to the packers.

When Lee descended into the boat assisted by the colonel, John Nanabosh scowled black disapproval out of his fat little eyes. During the whole course of his acquaintance with the colonel no female had ever set foot in their boat. The colonel motioned him to his place, but John shook his head.

"No," he said thickly, "not go. You take white squaw—go fishin' lone. John not go."

"Good heavens!" gasped the colonel, "you're not in earnest, John?"

"Not go, by damn!" he repeated. "White squaw bring bad luck. Fish no bite. I know a man wants good Hinjun. Fish with him, I guess."

He made as though to walk away, but the colonel caught his arm.

"You old scamp!" he roared, "I've a mind to punch you. White squaw, by thunder!"

But in the depths of his own heart he sympathized with John, though he would not acknowledge it, even to himself.

"Oh, Colonel Woods, please let me out!" cried Lee. "I cannot think of spoiling your day. Really, it is rather humiliating. One would think I were a sort of Jonah!"

She turned on the Indian angrily, her Southern accent broadening in her excitement. "You are an ungrateful wretch, John Nanabosh. And after I have taken such an interest in your family, and the little red shoes and—and things I have bought for your papooses! Thank goodness, your wife shows more amiability; she has named the last one after me, Lee Nanabosh!"

The colonel tugged his mustache to hide a smile, and the group that had gathered about them laughed outright. But there were tears in Lee's eyes and John Nanabosh was touched. He remembered also that she was an American and very rich.

"I know what!" he said suddenly.

"I got nephew—young Simon. Very good boy. Not afraid white squaw. He row her. She fish near us. You pay me four dollars. Very well, hey?" He beamed ingenuously at them.

"It is an inspiration, John!" cried Lee gaily. "Your grasp of the situation is positively masterly. But let us be quick—we shall be the last in line as it is."

The launch was indeed emitting fierce snorts of suppressed energy, and the ten rowboats attached to one another by ropes in her wake were already packed with their freight of fishermen, guides and provisions.

The boats containing Colonel Woods and Miss Meredith were the last to fall in, and as John made fast Lee's boat and the first thrill of motion ran along the rope, a tall young Indian slid down to the seat in front of her as though he had delayed his entry till the last possible moment.

Those on the wharf shouted their final good-byes to those in the boats, the launch, circling widely, swung the string of small craft behind her as a big boy swings the little ones in a game of crack-the-whip; then she struck up the channel, passed the lighthouse and caught the first freshness of the breeze from the Georgian Bay.

In the bay itself all was blue quiet above and blue motion below, made up of little glancing waves. Far away on the horizon loomed Black Bill Island, and toward it a group of "Mackinaws" was headed, like a flock of tropical birds with their high-peaked, dark-red sails.

Drawing her hands through the cold water that raced by the boat, Lee turned from the landscape with a contented sigh, and examined her guide. She was interested in Indians.

He was a thin young fellow, yet sinewy, and he showed in a degree, rare for these days, the unconscious savage grace of his forefathers. His features were clear-cut and aquiline, and his dark hair lay in thick locks about his small, well-shaped head. His torn shirt revealed here and there his clear brown skin. The black line of his lashes was very distinct as he looked down at his slender hands, hanging limply between his knees.

Lee studied his face with a great deal of interest. He approached more nearly her Ideal Redman than any she had yet discovered, and she felt a thrill of pleasure in the thought that he was hers for the day.

"So you are young Simon?" she said. "And fortunately for me, you are not at all afraid of white squaws."

"Oh, no," said young Simon simply. "I am taught at Sunday-school by one."

Sunday-school! Lee groaned inwardly at the inappropriateness of it. This young savage with his eagle face and somber eyes, poring over the catechism and singing infant class hymns! Inwardly she groaned but outwardly she smiled, and young Simon marveled at her dimples.

"Then, as you go to Sunday-school, you have, of course, heard of poor Jonah. I must confess that this morning I have a fellow-feeling for him, and I am keeping an eye open for my whale. Do you think a sturgeon would do, Simon?"

Simon looked puzzled. Then he said—his voice was low and muffled:

"You are not like Jonah. You are too beautiful. You are like Rebecca, or perhaps Rachael."

"Do you think a man would serve seven years for me, Simon?"

"Well," Simon answered, looking at her intently, "a Jew might, but I think not an Indian. Of course," he added hurriedly, as he caught a slight flush on Lee's cheeks, "I know you would not *consider* either. You are an American. I mean—I cannot very well explain—but when an Indian loves a woman he wants her very much and right away. He would wait seven years for revenge, but not for love."

He busied himself with winding a reel to hide a momentary confusion, while Lee leaned over the gunwale, staring reflectively into the green and amber depths below.

When she looked up again Simon's dark eyes were fixed on her anxiously.

"I was going to say," he explained, "that I would not call a lady a white squaw; that is only my uncle's way of speaking. He does not know much English. You see, he has never been to Sunday-school."

"There is no need to apologize," said Lee, laughing lightly, and Simon marveled at the whiteness of her teeth. "To tell you the truth, I rather enjoyed the epithet. It was such a refreshing contrast to the way I am usually addressed. I perceive," she added more seriously, "that you learn, not only piety, but deportment, and—other interesting things from your teacher. You are an apt pupil, I fancy."

Simon's face lit up intelligently.

"Oh, yes," he said. "It is not only at Sunday-school that I learn, but every evening, after the lamps are lighted, my teacher—she is the

minister's niece—reads history with me, and 'Wonders of the Heavens,' and 'Light Science for the Young.' Once we read 'Which Loved Him Best?' That was fine, but we did not tell the minister! My teacher, Miss Murray, says I am very intellectual—that is, clever, you know. She is going to raise a subscription to send me to college, so I may become a missionary."

A missionary! Lee regarded his daring profile, his light and agile body made for deeds of reckless bravery, and her anger rose against the woman who wished to clothe this gloriously primitive being in a black waistcoat and choker, and arm him with sentimental tracts for his heathen brethren.

She laid her hand on his knee and looked at him imploringly. For the third time young Simon marveled. Now it was at the tender gray-blue of her eyes.

"Don't," she pleaded. "Please don't. It would be such a waste. There are plenty of boys who look like missionaries; but you"—her eyes swept him—"you are such a perfect type of a young savage! All you lack is a crest of feathers in your hair, a dash of warpaint on your cheeks, and at your belt a tomahawk; and with that eagle nose and the poise of your head—you would be magnificent!"

"And you—would you admire me then?"

She smiled into his eyes.

"Admire you? I should just fall down and worship you! Simon"—confidentially—"between you and me, I am sick to death of frock-coats and compliments and seeming to be what I am not and almost forgetting what I am. I long to shake it all off and be free. Papa says all women are savages at heart, but he does not understand and neither can you. But I must speak to someone and—of course, you think me quite crazy—"

"You are not happy. I understand," replied Simon.

They had now come among the islands, and with a last defiant snort the gasoline launch came to a standstill, and the Indians speedily loosed the connecting ropes of the boats in preparation for the day's sport.

John Nanabosh turned to his nephew and grunted a few words in Indian.

"What does he say?" asked Lee.

"He says to follow them, but not to get in their way," answered Simon.

"Tell him," said Lee, "that we are quite able to look after ourselves and that we intend to have an enormous catch in spite of him."

She was very fond of fishing and was full of pleasant excitement as the colonel pointed out the course they were to take, and arranged her tackle for her. He warned Simon to keep within close range of them and to take excellent care of her.

"You have a precious cargo, young Simon," he said. "If anything happened to Miss Meredith, why, my life wouldn't be worth living. Watch out for squalls and don't let her fall overboard if she hooks a minnow, d'ye hear?"

Lee let her troll out slowly, and Simon pulled the oars with short Indian strokes. He followed the course of his uncle about twenty yards in the rear, around a barren and rocky island that had been burnt over and the spire-like crest of which was now topped by a few charred pines. About its base were many loose rocks scattered into the water, and around these slim green rushes had put up for shelter. There were deep holes near the island and Simon said the black bass knew it well.

However, before he had pulled a dozen strokes, there came a sharp jerk at the line, then a few heavy tugs at short intervals, and Lee predicted truly enough that she had hooked a pike.

She held him out to Simon, hanging glassy-eyed and limp from her hands.

"Poor Kenozha!" she said. "Shall I let him go?"

"He is pig enough to grab your hook a second time."

"Oh, but that's the fortune of war. Do let him go!" she urged.

So, with deft fingers, Simon slipped the hook from the flesh where it was buried, and the pike, without unseemly haste, slid back into the green depths, leaving a thin line of red in its trail.

As they turned a point of the island the other boat came into view and the colonel triumphantly displayed a small-mouthed bass.

"What luck!" he sang out.

"Just a call from my whale, but I sent him back to grow," replied Miss Meredith.

But her blood was up and she fished to such good purpose that when the colonel signaled them to draw in she had landed six fair bass.

As she was winding her reel the line jerked heavily and with a desperate plunge the pike was again brought up in the net.

"By the nine gods of war!" cried Miss Meredith delightedly. "It is Kenozha, the pike!"

"Sure enough," said Simon. "There's the old tear, and this time he

has swallowed the minnow and three hooks." He looked shyly from under his lashes and then. "He was a Jew, all right," he said.

They drew in for luncheon by a low, green island with a level, grassy space that served for a table. Young Simon built an Indian stove of flat stones; and the bass which an hour before had been romping in the lake were deftly skinned by John, rolled in cornmeal and consigned to the hissing pan. Richly crusted and flaky-white inside, it was a tempting dish that was set before the colonel and Miss Meredith. Also came potatoes boiled with their jackets on, vast slices of blueberry pie and coffee whose aroma was borne finely to the nostrils from the steaming pot.

The guides carried their own meal to a smooth sand-strewn rock, where they chewed meditatively in absolute silence.

When their hunger was appeased and the colonel was puffing contentedly at his pipe Lee drew his attention to the fine physique of young Simon.

The colonel nodded approvingly.

"You're right," he affirmed. "A chap like that makes other men seem puny. He looks as though the noble red man of fiction were regenerate in him. Quite a contrast to his pudgy uncle, isn't he?"

"Yes, they stand there, the Degenerate and the Regenerate! If Simon only knew, if we could only teach him to be what Nature intended—a primal savage, and, as you say, a regenerate. I would feel that I had done something of real artistic value. It would be the saving of a type."

The colonel looked at her with smiling old eyes.

"I should not think that would be difficult," he said. "In fact, you have no idea how regenerate I feel when I see you sitting there in that blue dress with your hair all ruffling up like little sun-kissed waves."

"Colonel," said Lee severely, "must I call the chaperon? And moreover, I object to the simile—my hair is *not* blue."

"Neither is the lake," persisted the colonel. "Just now, it's a golden, glowing, sandy hue, not at all unlike your hair. As for Simon, he will not be the first fisherman who has been made a missionary, and if I mistake not, *his* name was Simon, too. It's a coincidence—fate, you may call it, Miss Meredith."

He rose and tapped the ashes from his pipe.

"Now, what do you say to a little still-fishing off that point? Feel how the air is cooling and how gently those ripples beat time! Methinks it is an auspicious moment, my Piscator."

But Miss Meredith had had enough fishing for one day, and she

announced her intention of lounging on the rocks with her book for an hour.

"Simon will get anything I want, and you are within a whoop and a holler, as we say in the mountains down home." So she settled it.

Lee stretched out with her book before her, but her eyes lingered on the lake, now at its peace fullest, more often than on the page.

The island was very still. The old black rock was warm and up through a crevice a blueberry bush had grown, whose frosted berries clustered near her hand. She touched it caressingly, "Poor blueberry bush, they would plant you in a red flower-pot and call you a geranium."

She wondered sleepily where Simon was, and in her fancy saw him, bow in hand, gliding through the woods after his prey. Suddenly his hand is raised to his ear, an arrow cuts the air and bird falls, fluttering, to the rocks. With his dark face alight with pleasure, he strides back to where one waits whose dusky locks fall about her smooth, brown shoulders. He lays it at her feet.

There was the dry crackle of a dead branch, the bushes parted and Simon's stalwart figure filled the opening. From his hand hung a dead gray gull.

"See," he said, holding it up, "it has been wounded. It flew here to die—"

"Simon!" interrupted Lee ecstatically, "your entrance was positively dramatic! I had just been weaving you into a dream; you were to enter carrying the spoils of the hunt, your bow in hand, and, *voilà!* here you are! But where is the bow? How careless of you to forget it!"

"I did my best," said Simon. "I stuck this in my belt. I thought it would please you." He displayed, rather shamefacedly, a small hatchet, used in the boat for killing the larger fish. "You see," he added in explanation, "I could not help hearing what you said to Colonel Woods about me. Your voice carries well."

She blushed with pleasure.

"I am touched, Simon, really, that you should care—like that. And you make such a picture standing there, with the green of the firs for a background and that intense look in your eyes." She sprang suddenly to her feet and laughed gaily. "Simon, oh, Simon! I have an idea! It is magnificent.

"I shall transform you into a proper savage while you wait. Quick! Pull out the longest feathers from the gull's wings and I will make a headdress for you—then your cheeks may be painted and your hair

rumpled. Simon, you must try to *feel* the part! Swell out your chest and cultivate a lust for blood. Oh, if you only knew how *savage* I can feel!"

She dragged him to a fallen tree and made him sit still while she fashioned a sort of crown of feathers in his hair. She found some berries, such as squaws use for staining their baskets, and losing herself in her enthusiasm she energetically rubbed the color from these into his brown cheeks. Nor did she feel how hot they grew under her touch nor see how glowingly his eyes looked up to hers.

The blood mounted to Lee's face when she stepped back to get a better view of her handiwork. It seemed not so much a transformation she had worked as a creation. Simon rose and faced her.

The crest of feathers above his brow gave an added height and pride to his bearing; the red of his cheeks seemed repeated in his eyes, as though a smoldering ferocity in them had leapt into flame.

Her heart beat quickly as she shook off a momentary flash of fear, and sweeping him a low curtsy she said lightly.

"The noble redman breathes again in you! Chief of the North, I kiss your hand."

For a moment Simon stared at her, standing motionless, his underlip caught in his teeth and his hand resting on the hatchet at his side. Suddenly he snatched it from his belt and brandishing it above his head he stood poised so, incarnadined in the light of the setting sun, then, throwing back his head, he emitted a yell, so fierce, so blood-curdling, that Lee, in terror at the sound and sight, pressed her hands to her ears and shrieked wildly.

In an instant he had flung the axe to the rock and was at her side, shamestricken.

"I did not know what I was doing," he said hoarsely. "My God! I didn't! It was a sort of challenge for you, I think. I do not understand. It was wrong."

"It was splendid," sobbed Miss Meredith. "But so sudden. I think I feel like Pygmalion when Galatea stepped from her pedestal." The sound of hurrying steps came to them and she added tragically, "The colonel! It is the colonel!"

"Thank heaven!" gasped the poor gentleman, "I am in time."

He clutched Simon by the collar and shook him furiously. "You scoundrel!"

"Colonel, poor, dear colonel, it is all a huge joke!" said Lee, laughing through her tears. "Simon and I are playing Indian. *Rien que cela!*"

"*Rien que* the devil! It is a little past a joke to frighten your friends

into fits, young lady. Take off those traps, you Indian, and get to your boat. The launch has whistled twice." He strode angrily down the rocks, cracking his leg with his fishing-rod.

Lee and Simon followed like children detected in some mischief; she, taking the rebuke with unwonted docility, for she was more frightened than she cared to own.

Simon was not visible while they were making their preparations to embark and when he reappeared all outward traces of his transformation had been removed, but Lee noticed that his nostrils were dilated and when he helped her to her seat he gave her fingers a quick pressure as though of reassurance.

The two boats were met by the launch and her train. Simon at once made fast the ropes and they swung into line.

It was almost dark except for a greenish bronze glow, aftermath of the sunset. Against it the rows of islands showed, richly wooded, the narrow channels between them leading like silver aisles to the altar in the West. The moon hung low, but gave no light as yet; only her broken reflection was tossed to and fro by the waves. A heavy sea rolled.

Lee's boat plunged forward by a series of jerks and she caught momentary glimpses of the launch as it rose panting on the crest of a wave.

It was too dark to distinguish the features of her companion, but his attitude seemed to express a certain watchfulness and he frequently peered into the dusk, as though to make sure of his bearings.

A wave broke on the gunwale and dashed against her. She gave a little cry. Simon slid to her side, crouching in the space between the seats.

"You are my darling," he whispered, "you are my dearest darling. I will wreak vengeance"—he struggled with the store of words gained by his reading for a suitable phrase—"I will wreak vengeance on thy enemies."

So astounded was Lee at this outburst that speech failed her; twice she tried, but the words would not come. Then she pushed him from her and cried wildly, "How dare you? How dare you?"

Simon struck his hand into his palm.

"I dare anything. I dare this—watch me!"

He crept to the bow and knelt there while he felt for something at his side. There was a furtive gleam of steel as he drew his hunting-

knife. It had scarcely flashed into Lee's consciousness what he was about to do when he bent forward and with a swift movement of his arm drew the blade across the connecting rope with such force that it was severed clean at the first stroke.

At the same instant a wave crashed against the bow, sweeping them backward and almost throwing Lee from her seat. The boat reeled from the shock, turned dizzily in the trough and then righted itself—free, with the string of boats slowly crawling into the dark like a black snake with one fiery eye.

Lee's anger was turned to sickening fear. She sprang to her feet unmindful of the rocking of the boat and, making a trumpet of her hands, screamed shrilly for help. The wind beat down her voice to a whisper, and seeing that help from that quarter was hopeless, she caught up the oars, fitted them with trembling hands in the locks, and pulled with all her strength.

At the first stroke a wave caught the blade of her left oar and wrenched it from her grasp. They would have been swamped but for Simon, who lifted her almost roughly from the seat and took the oars himself.

With a few strong strokes he steadied the boat, then leaned forward to Lee with a puzzled look on his dark face.

"Are you not glad?" he said. "Just think we are free. You shall never see those people again."

Lee felt that her only hope in combating this strange development lay in keeping outwardly calm, at least; so, though her cheeks paled, she spoke composedly.

"I can see, Simon, that you have placed a wrong meaning on what I said today—indeed. I can see now that I was to blame. I meant nothing like this. I was only regretting the loss of a type, you understand; I did not think of you as a—a *man*!"

"I do *not* understand," he answered. "You said you wished that the old Indian would be born again in me. It is. I am as much the savage as my people two hundred years ago. *They* did not ask the woman whether she were willing. They carried her off because they loved her. I love you—Lee. That is your name, I know. Lee—my love!" He made as though to go to her, but she threw out her hands and screamed in fright.

"If you touch me I will throw myself into the lake. Oh, Simon, how can you be so ridiculous? Why, they will search for me—do you think

my father will rest night or day? You will be imprisoned. What of your boasted savagery then?"

"You think me very silly. I shall not be caught. I have thought it all out. In a cove of Chief Island I have a canoe hidden. I will take you there and leave this boat floating bottom side up, so they will think we have been drowned. Tonight I will take you to the island which no white man knows. My uncle has shown me. There are ways, there are channels, there are deep, deep woods, which none but our family know." He gave a low laugh in pleasant contemplation of his plans. "Oh, we shall be hidden safely! Then, by night, we will travel, up through the lakes, always North, to the Northland. There are many to show us the way—but none to tell the way to those who seek us. And by then you will love me and we shall be so happy!"

"I had it from a trapper, a cousin of mine, that there are green valleys where the deer come in herds to feed; and little lakes, blue like your eyes, where the trout lie, shoulder to shoulder, and are not afraid." He took her hands in his and went on gently: "Will you come, beloved? After all, I am civilized, I think, for I cannot bear that you should not want to come."

Lee let her hands lie in his and looked quietly in his eyes.

"Listen, Simon," she said. "I did you wrong, but you must not wrong me. What you say sounds like a fairy-tale, but it is not real life. My father would certainly find you, and I think—I know he would kill you. As for *me*—" her voice broke passionately—"you—an Indian! I would as soon marry a negro!"

His hands gripped hers so sharply that it hurt. The moonlight falling on his face showed a smear of red on one cheek that looked like blood. He spoke huskily.

"I almost struck you then. I am glad that I didn't, but I'm going to take you in spite of yourself. If you scream, I will tie something over your mouth; if you say you hate me, I will kiss you; if you throw yourself overboard, I will jump after and save you; if you call me a negro, I'm afraid I shall strike you. So come in peace."

Overcome by fear, Lee closed her eyes and tried to believe it was all a dream. She thought of her father's agony when her absence was made known, and she reproached herself bitterly for her wilfulness in coming.

When she looked again there, black in the moonlight, was Simon silently rowing, and the harsh outlines of the Chief Island looming ever nearer.

Simon picked his way with care now, for there were rocks fringing the sandy cove where his canoe lay. Lee strained her senses for some sign of life on the island, but it lay desolate and forbidding, its silence accented by the faint drumming of a partridge among the pines.

Once, as they slipped through the smooth water of the little bay, she burst into piteous entreaties to Simon, but his one reply was that he loved her; and this he repeated gently but finally, as though there were nothing more to be reckoned on. Only once he answered, "You made me what I am. Now you must pay." He struck the oars deep in the water for emphasis, sending up a shower of fiery drops. And then again, "I love you."

Gloomy as the island was, Lee felt relieved at the thought of leaving the boat, and she hoped desperately that when Simon stood on the rocks once more this madness—for it almost seemed that—would leave him.

Suddenly she was startled from her thoughts by the bulk of something, blacker still than the night, that rose before them.

"Take care, Simon," she cried, "take care! We are almost on a great rock—back water!"

But as she spoke she heard the deep voice of a man, and a light appeared above what she had supposed to be a rock and which she now perceived was a fishing-tug lying at anchor. The light beamed from a lantern held above the blond head of Giles Oldham, the owner.

"Lord 'a' mercy!" he ejaculated. "Who are you that slip onto honest folks that way? I'm a-settin' no net, I tell ye, but th' engine is out o' gear an' I needs lay up 'ere to tinker hup a bit." His eyes bulged in amazement when the ray of light touched the girl's face, but he expanded perceptibly, for he had thought to be cornered by the inspector in his black yawl. The lantern shone more tranquilly as his hand ceased trembling.

"So ho, Bill!" he sang out. "Let 'er daown! It's nobody but Miss Merrydith an' young Nanabosh—praise the Lord for that!"

Lee explained tremblingly that they had been parted from the rest of the company because of a rotten rope; and Giles at once offered to take them in charge. He lifted Lee in his strong arms to the deck of the *Grace G.* and made her comfortable in the wheel-house with a great fishy-smelling blanket and a cup of strong tea, while Simon stood by in deferential acquiescence.

Whatever the impediment to the progress of the *Grace G.*, it was now

easily overcome by the honest Giles; and he instructed the half-breed Bill to put on full steam.

"It's well for you, miss," he said emphatically, "that you 'ad young Simon with you. 'E's as safe as a church, 'e is, an' the most civilized Injun I know. Why, they be goin' to make a missionary of 'im. 'E'll carry all before 'im, miss, won't 'e?"

"That he will," said Miss Meredith graciously.

The *Grace G.* made good time, and in half an hour the red shaft from the Pointe au Baril lighthouse shot across the channel; then the familiar shadows were loosened, one by one, from the blackness, and last—the wharf and the cheering crowd, and the sight of her father's white head and anxious face. Colonel Woods took possession of her at once and led her triumphantly to her father.

"Here, Meredith," he growled, "take her in tow. Thank heaven, mine are all boys—gad, no wonder your head is white, suh!"

It was with difficulty that Lee escaped from her friends and drew Simon aside.

She raised her eyes, all bright with enthusiasm, to his.

"It was magnificent," she said. "Now that it is all over and I am safe with papa, I can see that it is quite the most picturesque incident that has ever happened to me. At the time, you know, I was a little frightened, but now I can see that it was superb—perfectly splendid, in fact!"

She nodded and smiled at him, her fair hair blown about her piquant face; then, with a rustle of crisp linen, she was gone, and he was left alone in the group of stolidly staring guides.

Young Simon slid to his place in his uncle's canoe and plied his paddle with long, meditative strokes. When they were in the middle of the channel alone John Nanabosh laid his paddle across the gunwale and grunted. Simon did likewise. John spoke then in Indian.

"Why did you do it?" he demanded. "I knew the rope had been cut as soon as I looked at it, and I hid it so they would not see. For what did you do it?"

"I was trying to be what she calls regenerate," replied young Simon laconically, "but it is no use. I think I shall be a missionary, after all."

GHOSTS

by Edgar Saltus*

"DO you believe in ghosts?" somebody asked an old lady. "No, I do not," she replied, "but I am dreadfully afraid of them."

The ghosts promenading here will not alarm. Mainly they are gamblers, and gambling is a highly poetic diversion—not, of course, as it is conducted at Monte Carlo, where you are jostled by vulgar millionaires—but gambling as it was practised in New York at a time when there was not a shop on Fifth Avenue.

In those days a band of young men gathered together, staked their money and gambled in sonnets. The rhymed ends of lines were written in sequence on sheets of paper; these were distributed, then silence. The Pleiades were at work. The one who first properly and Petrarchianly finished his sonnet, pocketed the stakes.

One of the quickest at it was a florid troubadour with a cavalry mustache who, though he resided in the super-select home of his sisters, had, in Tompkins Square, a tower of ivory, a retreat of his own, where, for the greater glory of the Muse, in silence he came and in silence departed, until the neighbors, fancying him a counterfeiter, called the police, when, without effort, he was discovered to be an entirely reputable person, Edgar Fawcett by name.

Another gambler was Frank Saltus. Fawcett, after the fashion of poets, rather fancied himself, and Frank used to write him letters that purported to emanate from passionate young heiresses, feverishly in love with the bard. These letters, to Frank's great delight, Fawcett always read to him—like a gentleman, though, in strictest confidence, yet with an air—dear me!—of what complacent satisfaction! Though he may know now that the heiresses were myths, he did not then. To the day of his death he believed in them. To the day of his death he used to say: "*Atque ego in Arcadia vixi.*" Now probably he knows. In his rocking chair on Parnassus probably, too, he forgives.

Though I do not deserve it, it may be even that I also am forgiven by him. On an occasion when a metropolitan hostess gave a reception to Oliver Wendell Holmes, I sinned most stupidly. Fawcett was bidden;

* The scholarly and sensuous Edgar Saltus was one of the exotics in the literary conservatory of New York at the dawn of the Century. He was one of the first contributors to *The Smart Set*.

I was also; and I asked him what he proposed to say to the Autocrat. "I shall say," he answered—and I could see from the manner in which he distilled his words that he had given the subject much agreeable reflection—"I shall say that meeting him is the episode of my life."

At the reception it so fell about that I made my bow before Fawcett could. I can see now the narrow, clever face, the shrewd, indulgent eyes and the gracious, gratified look I got when, bowing again, I said it. "Dr. Holmes, believe me, this is the episode of my life." From the depths of the subconscious, unintentionally, the phrase had hopped out. It was impossible to take it back, impossible to explain. My one recourse was to intercept Fawcett. But, engulfed as I immediately became by a sea of millinery, I failed. When at last I did see him, he, too, had said it. "Do you know," he ragingly told me, "Holmes acted as though I were guying him!" It was ludicrous but it was shameful. Yet today, in that rocking chair, I am sure he forgives. He had a big head at times, but always a bigger heart.

Meanwhile the gambling continued. One of the most demoniac at it was George Edgar Montgomery, an aureoled youth who was called the Poet of the Future, and for whom today one may vainly interrogate the past. But he had his hour. In the course of it he married. At the wedding, the bride, a very pretty girl, fainted three times. To marry a poet—there, don't you think, is the joy that affrights.

There were other gamblers, other poets, young men of enormous promise which the wrestling match that life is left them no time to fulfill, yet who had for the Philistine, for the bourgeois, for humanity in general, a disdain that seemed to me leonine. They all were, or affected to be, antitheists, and because Herbert Spencer had theorized on the Unknowable, they considered him sunk in the grossest superstitions. But their negations were not always very fervent. One of them startled me, and probably himself, by predicting that for the blasphemies of his verse he would be struck by a meteor. A course of breakfasts at midnight on foie gras and cura çao, spared him that fate.

A poet more Christian was Joaquin Miller. At school I had supped on Aristophanes, on what the fates and the Fathers have left us of Æschylus, on John Hay also, on Bret Harte, particularly on the "Songs of the Sierras." Their note, occasionally a bit Byronic perhaps, but otherwise new, seemed to me splendid. The legend of the minstrel, fighting Indians and the prairie fire while finding and fashioning his numbers, seemed to me superb. The possibility of seeing and speaking to him never occurred to me.

Unexpectedly that honor was mine. It was in the final seventies, at a now vanished hotel. He was entering the lobby. I lined up at once, as one does for royalty, my hat high in the air. An acquaintance presented me. Immediately I recited a verse from the "Songs." "That," I said, "is the finest thing in the English language." He was good enough to agree with me. Well, why not?

Long later, in Paris, I met Owen Meredith. To that poet of the eighteenth year I quoted some of the poetry of it, and told him the same thing. He also agreed with me. Afterward I mentioned the incident to Fawcett, who looked extremely uncomfortable. For a moment I did not understand, then, almost at once, I got it. I had omitted to say the same thing to him. The omission repaired, he thanked me with that gravity which, even in serious matters, he usually displayed.

Usually but not always. The sight of a rejected manuscript was super-sufficient to make him turn his apartment into a bestiary of words that roared. "I will not wear that coat," I once, through closed doors, heard him shout at his servant. "I tell you I will not wear that coat!" He paused, possibly for breath, then in the tone of an assassin hissed: "Very good, I will wear it; and if I catch cold it will be your fault." At that, the doors were thrown open and the portrait, on foot, of an English beefeater appeared. "And how," I soothingly inquired, "is the Master?" "I am starving!" he flung at me. "So-and-So has returned my poem. Were the varlet here, I would take my battle axe and I would kill him."

All of which was pure poetry. Fawcett had no battle axe. Even otherwise, he would not have harmed a fly. Moreover, the next day or the day after, I met him on Fifth Avenue. He was arm in arm with that varlet. I knew what had happened. He had written something that pleased him. Fawcett kept an account book, alphabetically arranged. If you offended him, in it you went with bad marks after you. If he wrote anything that he particularly liked, he rose from the table, bowed to himself in the mirror and granted a general amnesty. The varlet had profited by some such remission.

In reference to those bows, Fawcett once said to me: "*Non omnis moriar*." I think he erred. I think he is wholly dead. It is a confounded shame. He was a real poet. Yet, somehow, he just missed it. The rival whom he feared, but whom he distanced, was my brother, Frank Saltus. Fawcett could scribble a song, as a poet should, in no time. But what he scribbled he rewrote, and wrote again, and what he wrote was in English only. One evening, in less than a hour, Frank Saltus

wrote verses to Patti in four languages and put them to music. His facility was frightful and even uncanny. He wrote as a bird sings, spontaneously, without effort. But he never revised. What he had written he had written, and according to him that was the end of it. It was the end of it. Today he is as dead as Fawcett.

But I believe he was a genius, and that I think none of the rest of the Pleiades was. Prodigal in all things, he threw his genius out of the window. Longfellow said of him that he never knew a young man better equipped for the vocation of poet. Of the equipment there remain today two original metres, which recent rhymesters have appropriated, and the fading echo of after-dinner talk that was as brilliant as Barbey d'Aurevilly's. Like Fawcett, he just missed it. He missed it because perhaps he had a fiber too many, as Fawcett missed it because, it may be, he had a fiber too few. To contemporary critics both were minor violins in the great orchestra of letters. But at least they were in the orchestra. That they are not there now must be quite immaterial to them. Yet, everything being possible, when they return here, one or the other may hold the baton.

Another ghost is Stedman. The Pleiades regarded him negligently. He was a banker, a broker, something in the Street, consequently good at figures, and it was held that no mathematician can be a poet. And yet why not? With figures, mere figures, with figures only and nothing else, a human insect discovered a planet. If that were not epic, one may wonder what is.

But it was not Stedman who did it. In looking back I can see him passing into darkness—see, too, others coming to the light. Among the latter was Stuart Merrill. In the erudite pandemonium that occultism is, Swinburne is reported to have been Catullus and Tennyson Ovid. The report may be untrue, but that does not detract from its interest. On the other hand, assuming its validity, then Merrill may have been Lully. What he has written is just so many bars of harmony, pure indeed but not always simple. Merrill was not either. Born with a gold pen in his mouth, he had every gift, including the supreme one which is serenity. He would never be serious about anybody, about anything. Such an attitude is charming in addition to being eminently Pyrrhonian. In conjunction with his verse—always in French—it took him to the door of the Académie Française, and might have taken him within had he not been an American, more exactly, a New Yorker.

But one never knows. To become a mandarin of the Occident is per-

haps a matter of predestination. Lacking that, then, as Gautier somewhere stated, three hundred masterpieces recognized as such by the genuflections of an adoring universe, and even by the Academy itself, will not suffice for election. But, if you are predestined, then, however poverty-stricken your wares, Sesame—you are in there.

Bourget is a case in point. Always he has tried so hard to write well, and never once has succeeded. Verlaine is another. After his discharge from prison I had the signal honor of meeting him, and I can see him now, Socrates and Anacreon in one, hiccoughing down the laurel lanes, paying with enigmatic songs the food which young poets provided, distilling a mysterious music from the absinthe offered by them, and presenting at last a spectacle unique in literature, that of a singer applauded in a charity bed and rising from it to become one of the glories of France—though not of the French Academy.

It was through Merrill that I met him. Merrill previously had kissed his hand to Fifth Avenue. Before sailing he gave a dinner at which Harden-Hickey, George Pellew, myself and several others were present. In the course of it the post-mortem came up. Somebody expressed the usual stupidity that there is nothing in it. It was objected that such a view was not scientific, but, as it might also have been objected—and probably was—that science is the classification of human ignorance, the objection fell flat. Then Pellew, a poet interested in psychical phenomena, related ghostly experiences and promised that if after death he found anything he would return and tell of it. To many of us the promise seemed an impossible draft on an equally impossible future. Yet, that same night, Pellew, on going home, slipped on the stoop, fell backward and broke his skull. Later, that promise of his, he kept. He returned and spoke through Mrs. Piper. I am not making this up; it is all down in the reports concerning her.

As these ghosts go, Pellew, obviously, is *primus*. But Harden-Hickey runs him close. In Paris, where I first met him, he enjoyed, in addition to a problematic title, the formidable repute of being the crack duelist of France. A poet and a wit, he was doubly dangerous. His pen stung as promptly as his sword. Therewith he was antithesis made man. He looked like a buccaneer, behaved like a débutante, talked like Rabelais, lived like a sage, edited a comic paper and wrote a book on suicide.

Born—and very modestly—in San Francisco, in what manner he became a baron I never inquired. There are mysteries which one prefers

to ignore rather than to elucidate. It may be that the Comte de Chambord, whose henchman he had been, gave him the title. It may also have been self-bestowed. But not, I think, a decoration that he wore. Poets all have their crosses; in Paris they are those of the Legion of Honor. Yet presently he wearied of the boulevards, or they did of him, and he returned to this country where, apparently without effort, he conceived the idea of resigning the title of baron and assuming that of king. At Trinidad, a speck of an island off Brazil, he proposed to establish a monarchy and proposed also to reign. To me he was graciously pleased to offer the post of laureate. As I could have carried my poetic luggage, without a wrinkle, in the pocket of an evening waistcoat, I was immensely flattered, particularly as he had already established a chancellery in New York and another in London; and I could picture myself in a barge down there, a court barge, crimson-hulled, purple-rigged, freighted with youth and beauty. But not a bit of it. The Powers intervened, or he said they did, and suddenly he killed himself.

Harden-Hickey's poetical luggage was, if possible, as light as my own, but, in point of time, he belonged to the Victorian era, during which, in this country, in France and in England, there was a constant cascade of real song. Today there is no more verse like that. There are no poets now such as those who have gone. At the beginnings of centuries that is usually the case. But in a generation or two, bards will bloom anew. Then they, too, will pass, and a hundred years hence it will be said that there is no more verse like theirs. Yet always, in default of poets, there are their ghosts and always, when these are laid, always, too, will there be other poets.

AT TIO JUAN

A Story of the California Desert

by Mary Austin

IT is not probable that all the threads of this story have come together in any one hand except it be that of the priest who confessed Jean Rieske when he died. Shepherds are a solitary folk and in the nature of their occupation do not often foregather in great numbers; but where two or three are met together at shearings or when they pay the license

at Tres Pinos for the privilege of the Long Trail, or in chance encounters by coyote-scaring fires, by little and little dribbling through their slack speech you gather the least they know and all they guess of what happened to Red Narcisse Duplin at Tio Juan.

The Long Trail is no trail at all upon the maps, but well they know it who have travelled it up from the coast hill-ranges when, after a Winter of scant rains, the filaree curls, crisping, on the slopes. It lies along the eastern flank of the Sierras, bounded on the one side by unalterable desert, narrowed on the other by the encroachments of the forest reserves, until, in many stretches of days' journeys, it is scarcely more than a lane of close-browsed shrubs. But when Narcisse Duplin first took his sheep toward Tres Pinos it was not so. He would come up from Poso, where he had lands for use in lambing time, and work out by way of Greenhorn, cross through Walker's Pass and strike into the Long Trail above Coyote Holes, follow it at a sheep's pace to Tres Pinos, from there striking west or north as his shepherd's instinct for pasture led him.

Narcisse was born a shepherd in Auvergne and put to the care of a flock as soon as he could walk, but as he grew the land seemed to shrink and cramp him, so with such coin as he had—it was not much—and with a sheep-bell or two which he had grown to love as a man might the sound of his mother's voice, he came to that strip of country between Tremblor and the Minarettes, west of the desert and east of the San Joaquin, and inevitably to the care of sheep, first as a herder and afterward as an owner. When his sheep had become two bands he began to be known on the great thoroughfare which is called the Long Trail, between Poso and the snow-fed pastures of the north. That way he took when the golden poppies warmed all the river bluffs of Poso, and that way he came when the hills were steeped in the opal mists of November, twice in the year with half a dozen dogs and two herders of his own hiring. Always coming and going, he stopped at Tres Pinos to have a bottle with Jules Moynier and make love to Suzon or to crack the skull of any shepherd who dared attempt the same in his presence. For that was the way with Narcisse; he would have a whole allegiance or none. One must either love him or hate him; he would have nothing half-way. All who hated him feared him a little, all who loved him feared him very much. The herders loved him as did his dogs; Jules Moynier hated him, and Suzon—but you shall hear.

He was a red one, was Narcisse, red head, red beard, red the hair on his red sunburned arms and his wide chest, over which the kerchief

hung loosely in all weathers. Red was his mouth, and the teeth in it white and strong, and a red spark came in his eye when he loved or hated, both of which he did heartily. Strong he was and stocky of build and exceedingly long in the arms. Three sheep could he lift and carry, no weather-stress wore him and no labor of the flock fatigued. Laugh he would when the sheep were fat and the fleeces heavy, laugh when the ewes sickened or the Santa Anna came up in a golden cloud that smelled of dust and shriveled the lambs like young grass, laugh when he tricked another herder of the feed, laugh equally if he were tricked, or while he cracked the herder's head. The joy of life was strong in him; it came out gurgling and tripped him in his speech, widened the red lips in a smile between his words. So hearty he was even when he used you ill that it was a wonder anyone should hate him, and even Jules Moynier, who was no smiler, did not until he learned about Suzon.

Jules dealt in merchandise at Tres Pinos, and the best of the customers were the French traders who worked over the Long Trail in the Spring and Fall and brought him their trade for his name's sake. For it is as true as that wandering shepherds are mostly French that they stick by one another in any matter not directly touching the feed.

Jules had a grasping soul, a greedy, self-seeking soul that asked but one question of every occasion: What could it do for Jules? Therefore, though he began to hate Narcisse Duplin as soon as he saw his gaze go softly toward Suzon and the red spark come in his eyes as he looked, he kept it to himself on account of trade. But he made Suzon aware of it, and the girl, because she was forbidden to think at all of the red, laughing man, thought the more and tenderly.

When Narcisse first came to Tres Pinos with his sheep, Suzon was hardly so high as his shoulder, straight, with young budding breasts, and the color of an apricot. Having no mother she kept her father's house and waited upon customers. She had a way, quick and warm, that won her at times the censure of women, but not a man of the French herders would have admitted any harm in her; wilful she was, and uninstructed because she had no mother, but wholesome and clean-hearted. She won the love of the herders with a laugh, and, laughing, put by their protestations; but not after Narcisse had looked at her with the red spark in his eye. Such was the will and force of the man that having no more than looked he kept her constant to a thought. What she gave, she gave wholly and held to steadfastly. Red Narcisse

saw that she was good and for a year did no more than look, and that was not his usual way with women. The more he looked the more he desired her and was for that reason silent. He saw that it would come to marriage at last and marriage is not to be lightly thought of among shepherd folk in the rainless West. For the two months of lambing time Narcisse was at his place at Poso, the rest of the year abroad with the flock, seeking pasture. Under such circumstances there is little comfort to be got from a wife in the best of times. Nevertheless, he looked and desired. Suzon, growing aware of it, flushed and warmed, filled out bodily, became a sobered and passionate woman.

It was by this time, much too late, that Jules Moynier began to hate Narcisse Duplin and covered his hate with politeness. Narcisse, who read the old man to the bottom of his fearful, covetous soul, laughed.

It was the Spring of the year when Red Narcisse first asked Suzon to marry him. Spring of the year with the wild almond coming into flower, brown streams running full and a smell of fruitful earth in the air. They said nothing to old Jules about it, for he had left no doubt as to his sentiments on that score and their joy was too young to be troubled by it, and Suzon had disarmed her friends by telling openly of her engagement and what she meant to do about it, when the time had come, which was in fact not at all what Narcisse meant, nor what she did. Narcisse would come to the white alder by the creek in the alpenglow and give the call of the burrowing owl, mellow and round, until Suzon came out to him to walk among the willows; then Narcisse would laugh and make love to her in a fashion that made it well for Suzon that she was a good girl at heart.

The shepherd lingered about Tres Pinos with his flock that year until the young sage was all eaten to the ground, and neighborhood gossips began to talk. It was, perhaps, of what they told him that Jules Moynier first vented his hate and vented it upon Suzon when Narcisse was gone.

"Herd dog," he named him. "Red Narcisse, was he called? Ugh! Red Wolf," thinking perhaps of the strong teeth in the red mouth. Such names and viler the girl had to hear, ending with this: "that he should keep away from decent girls or he would see what he would see."

"Nevertheless," said Suzon, "I mean to marry him."

"Psh!" said Jules Moynier.

The girl was not shaken, but Narcisse being out of the way—Suzon

could still see his camp-fire glowing nightly on the spur of Pine Mountain—there was no more to be said about it at that time. When he came again in the Fall and Suzon told him of her father's outbreak, Narcisse laughed, stood in the store buying vermicelli and lentils and laughed, making open love to her, old Jules looking on sourly but not daring anything on account of trade, for Red Narcisse was a man esteemed by the herders and his word ran with power; moreover, there was a certain way he had of being both quick and hot in his temper when stopped of his laughing.

For another year Narcisse came and went at the two seasons, while his flock increased, the girl's beauty ripened, his desire grew upon him and the old man's hate cankered in his breast. Jules had asked himself the usual question concerning his daughter's marriage, and found that there was nothing in it for Jules. Suzon drew trade and was apt about the house. If there was no one who could make such an omelet, equally there was no one to be found who would make it without pay. Jules rated her worth not at what she was, but at what it would cost to replace her. Narcisse also had prudence. It was reported that old Moynier had taken more dollars in his till than Narcisse had sheep in his flock; if he took the daughter without his blessing it would also be without dowry.

But when Suzon laid her pretty face against his sleeve and wept at her father's harshness he swore there should be no more of it. Suzon wept again and trembled greatly. Being a good girl, she wished to be married by a priest, the more so to win forgiveness for the sin of disobedience. Narcisse, who had no morals of his own, only a great good-nature, thought the more of her on that account, swore she should be married as she wished, would she but trust him. Ah, would she not! So he kissed her and brought her back to the window by which she had come out to him among the willows.

Narcisse had five months to plan how he should bring Suzon away from Tres Pinos and not neglect the flock, which, now it was to be charged with the expense of a family, must be the more carefully looked to. There was no priest to be come at nearer than Los Angeles, for the town Justice was not to be thought of on account of old Jules, and between Tres Pinos and any place where a runaway marriage could be properly consummated lay days' journeys of waste and sand, wind-blown dunes, valleys full of hot, dry haze. The railroad by which one came to olive and orchard lands and vainglorious cities skirted its

southern border. Once the vacant hills between had been choked with mining life, swirling in as waters to a rain-fed spring, falling away as swiftly when the rain was past. Not without traces, though. High on the highest of the treeless hills the town of Tio Juan warped asunder in the staring sun. Its rows of unpainted wooden cabins with no power in that dry air to waste or rot, stood defenceless as they had been left by the swift eddy that drew its people to other camps. Shingles curled away from unweathered roof-trees, doors warped from unrusty fastenings and revealed cheap furniture parting at its joints within. Rabbits ran in and out of the rooms and lean coyotes hunted them in the streets. After infrequent Winters of copious rains, when a web of radiant blossoms spread on all the rolling hills, Narcisse would swing his flock in a wide circle about Tio Juan and keep his camp there in the best of the desolate houses. His herders, to whom the place had a haunted look, preferred the open. It was, in reality, as safe as a fortress, isolated by desertness, seldom visited, passing into the traditions of the hills before its timbers rotted. It had but one approach, by a rift in the country rock, a knife-cut gorge down which a stream poured when there was water enough in that district to make a stream. The country rock was white, with reddish iron stains, dull, glistening white and dull, suggestive red. Wild grapes grew in the gorge, straight, eager stringers of the vines went up the white, wall-sided cliffs, and where the quartz rotted away from scarp and buttress the desert ravens made their nests. All hours they hung in the clear thin atmosphere, swung and tilted above Tio Juan.

The Winter during which Narcisse planned how he should run away with Moynier's pretty daughter was one of unusual rains. Winds drove them up from the California gulf and drifted them in from the coastward valleys; far and far inland they marked their dim, sweet trails with unaccustomed bloom. It was the rains and their promise of good pasture that put the thought of Tio Juan into Narcisse's mind. Then the lover's dream he had of sheep-bells sounding in the wilderness and Suzon beside him in the tender desert Spring, thrilled his big body with delight.

Of his herders, Narcisse trusted Jean Rieske most but not so much as Jean trusted him. Narcisse had lifted Rieske from an extremity of distress, and the fellow would have sooner questioned Christ in Judgment than his master's plans. These were simple enough, and, but for the thought of the dowry which stuck in Narcisse's mind, would have gone

very well. With the help of one other herder who might be hired for that purpose he could hold the flocks in the neighborhood of Tio Juan for a month, and having established camp there could bring the girl away from Tres Pinos unsuspected by Jules Moynier. Three days would take them to the priest and afterward there would be a Summer of roving in the high Sierras of the Snow, Suzon to ride in the supply wagon beside him as he followed his herders from camp to camp. Or perhaps he would make it up with the old man; for suppose Narcisse took it into his head to turn the French shepherds away from Moynier—and they hung together like their own sheep—what then would become of trade?

When on the trail Narcisse would send the flocks out flanking his course to the right and left, keeping as much as possible to the traveled road with the supply wagon, overtaking and passing from one to the other as need arose. This Spring, after he came through the Gap and touched the treeless hills, he put another man to the care of Jean's flock and took the herder in the wagon beside him. Only Jean knew what went into the supplies not common to a shepherd's use, and though Narcisse had not put his purpose to the proof of speech it must be supposed that he believed Jean Rieske was aware of much that lay at the back of his mind. Between men of simple and solitary habit there passes the same sort of wordless communication known to their sheep and dogs. In this order they left the Long Trail at Indian Wells and began to work across toward Tio Juan.

Wandering herders, who met Red Narcisse on the Long Trail that year, tried afterward to piece out of the memory of his behavior a warning of what was known to have occurred. They recalled that he clapped them jovially and laughed much, they believed sinisterly. Gossips of Tres Pinos, who feigned to remember in Suzon that Spring an index of her fortune, could only say that she went collectedly and with a sober countenance, which they conceived to be of dark intent. As for Jules, he took his accustomed way of interrogating life as to what it had in it for Jules. Narcisse made his secret camp for himself. What he told, what his herders guessed, what presage was abroad in the air breeding knowledge is known, as I have said, only to Jean Rieske's confessor.

It was in the clear and shadowless light of dawn when Narcisse Duplin set out for Tres Pinos and he rode all that day with a led horse beside him, and on into the dark when he had the twinkle of Suzon's

light in the window to guide him. Suzon came out to him trembling, knowing his plan by letter, but needing to have it rehearsed and reassured. If she wavered, if an awakening of daughterly regard trembled in her heart, if a presage of the dark event weighed upon her, if the phrases of a better resolve rose upon her lips, one kiss of Red Narcisse's laid them low.

Having met and found all well they went back through the town for Suzon's small bundle. Narcisse laughed as he went; afterward when the night's work was known there were those who remembered how the laugh of Red Narcisse floated in the dark with the smell of the blossoming vines. The plan went well. Love and the night were all about them; old Jules slept on. But when Suzon had crept in by the window, Narcisse began to think of the old man's dollars; Suzon's dollars, in fact; for had she not earned them? Moynier was known to have a distrust of banks and thought to keep his coin by him.

Narcisse was drunk with the wine of excitement and the triumph of love, fevered with the pulse of adventure, and, lying in wait to do one questionable act, called upon himself, like buzzards to the quarry, the thought of faithless deeds. Suzon was gone too long. All Tres Pinos was asleep, but the Power that makes us aware of mischief to the thing we love was awake and walking by the creek. In the interval when Narcisse awaited the girl at the bottom of the garden, it went and stood in the house of Jules Moynier; it passed him when his daughter left his roof, but when his money-box was threatened, returned and stood beside him. Old Jules awoke.

Although it was well on in the Spring and a scent of blossoming vines increasing with the night, Suzon, when she came with her bundle to the foot of the garden and her lover not at hand, stood and shivered by the willows until Narcisse came. It was dark under the vines where the horses wore upon the bit and the air smelled of crushed, pungent herbs. No sound reached from the village, yet they spoke softly; none stirred in the houses and no light shone, yet they moved fearfully.

"Mount," he said in some haste, and breathing hard. So they rode a little while in mid-stream and then on shifty sand, now in the traveled road and then in the open scrub stretching dimly toward Tio Juan. Love and the night had their way with them. The stars came out, the air was like balm and wine. Red Narcisse leaned from his saddle and kissed his sweetheart on the mouth. They talked little, the girl forgot

her trembling. When she drowsed in the saddle Narcisse reached out a hand to her and the pulse beating where their palms met kept her awake. So they rode to Tio Juan.

If you wonder that I should be able to tell you this and yet not say clearly what Narcisse did to old Jules, it is not for anything Jean Rieske told me; rather that I know the road they took and have felt the earth pulse as it were a hand to clasp, and the softness of the desert Spring as it were a mouth to kiss; but no thought of mine can track Narcisse in the dreadful interval while poor Suzon waited and shivered at the foot of the garden.

When it was discovered that Jules Moynier lay in his house near death, with his money-box open and scattered coin upon the floor, the neighbors said, "Poor Suzon," and almost immediately it was discovered that there was no Suzon. The old man lay on the bed as if he had risen from it and been thrust back; there were marks upon him but not so it could be said that rage and fright had not their part in his death, which appeared not so much a part of the robbery as incident to it. For a moment only he arrived at consciousness and spoke two words. "Narcisse Duplin," he said, and died. Then it was the neighbors recalled the laugh going by in the night, and so by many small hints and clues and at last by proper evidence it was laid at the door of Red Narcisse. Narcisse's door at that time was the door of a half-ruined house at Tio Juan known only to himself and Jean Rieske and to the regardful ravens that wheeled above the nesting cliffs.

Behind it sat Suzon, in what mind who shall say? But Narcisse was not there. He that should have been riding as a bridegroom to a priest was out with the herders turning the sheep away from the pleasant pastures about Tio Juan to remoter high plateaus, islanded by desertness, where no other shepherd ever came. He that was so tender of his flocks pushed them hard; he that laughed at losses fumed at the death of one poor ewe and turned aside to hide it in the rocks. If the herders knew anything of his plans they must have guessed that they had gone amiss, but for their part they were as used as the sheep to doing what they were told. Two days Narcisse gave to the disposition of his flock and to conferences with Jean. Suppose any occasion should arise that the flock should be followed, it would be hard to say from what unguessed hollow of the treeless hills their windless blue of dust should rise, and if the flock were found Narcisse would not be with them.

By this his haste and desire of hiding it is surmised that he was

aware of the condition of Jules Moynier; it was even believed that he had arranged with Jean Rieske for the proper transfer of the sheep in case there should be a hue and cry and he be obliged to take Suzon out of the country. How much he told the girl, what excuses he made for the delay, what she suffered in the two days he was about it, not even Jean Rieske knew; and since no one knew how much old Jules had in his box none knows what Narcisse carried away, nor what became of it. These matters being all disposed, Narcisse was going back to the secret camp with his heart set toward love and the wilderness. Neither he nor the herders noted the solitary Indian who crossed their track, and later, falling in by accident with the sheriff of Tres Pinos, gave him news of the road. Narcisse went afoot, twirling his stick and striding steadily in a midday drowse, so that it was with a shock of surprise that he came upon the sheriff riding upon the opposite side of a narrow gully, steep and full of rubble as is common to that country. In the shock of meeting there passed between the two men the instant knowledge on the one side of the errand that brought him there, on the other of the utter futility of law against the person of Narcisse the Red.

The officer rose in his stirrups calling out the formula of arrest, the shepherd on the moment turning aside into the rocks seeking cover and likely to find it, for not even the rabbits know the country about Tio Juan as the wandering sheep herders know it. The sheriff of Tres Pinos took a great while always to explain that he never meant to kill Duplin; that he felt it no part of his office to shoot at unconvicted men; and that all he hoped to do was to frighten, or at the most to stop him with a bullet graze; that it was, in short, an act of Providence, and in no way to be laid to his account, in case there was a prospect of his reelection, that Duplin should twist his foot upon a stone and, plunging sidewise, have met the bullet with his heart—to have fairly leaped into it, as one might say. And though it was sometimes suspected that the sheriff's prolixity was by the way of excusing himself, the fact was that Narcisse Duplin met his death in that way, and was picked up from the bottom of the gully a quarter of an hour later with his long red arms doubled under him and a red froth on his mouth.

Not much search was made for Suzon. At Tres Pinos they had known her as a child and did not wish her back in that connection. Report spreading and gaining ground that a young woman had taken stage at Minton for the nearest railway point, it was guessed, and finally believed, that it was by that means she passed out of their lives.

Such pains had Narcisse taken to cover the traces of his sheep that it was nearly a month before Jean Rieske heard of his death and the place and manner of it. The news, so the other herders averred, seemed to deprive him of what little wit he had. As swiftly as possible and with a show of secretness he put back to Tio Juan. He pushed the flock furiously, and at last abandoned them, urged by they knew not what maggot in his brain, though he could have had no difficulty in steering a straight course and a short one, for the buzzards hung above it close and black, gathering and thickening as the fears in Jean Rieske's fumbling brain.

He knew, he must have known, by the true desert signs, what he should find before he came to the gateway of the white, glistening rocks, knew and had time for conning in his mind the common human fears of darkness and deserted places, the blank windows and the gaping doorways of the town, the maiden fears of desertion and betrayal, the uneasy mind that went out in drear imaginings to the cause of such delay, the sallings forth in hope and returnings in despair, the sickness, frenzies, madness that had come upon the girl before she had fallen or cast herself in the delirium of a disordered mind, on the red-stained battlements, much redder now, among the nests. Jean saw her dress fluttering between him and the sky as he came toiling up the gulch.

Whether or no there was any seal of silence on him other than the seal of his own elemental and faithful soul, he laid such a seal on the lips of Noé, whom he brought up to help him. Together they got her down and secretly buried her, but after Jean Riekse died Noé would tell fearfully in half hints and snatches to men of his own kind, what he knew, being helped to freer speech by the discovery, a year or two later, by some shepherds, of things that had been Suzon Moynier's, in a deserted house at Tio Juan. None of these matters ever came to the ears of the authorities. Jean Rieske fell into a melancholy madness not uncommon among men of solitary habit, and died unmolested by any other than the clamor of his own conscience for a priest, which being furnished, he made a good end. Therefore, though there is still talk on the Long Trail of a myth-making sort about Narcisse Duplin, the whole story of what happened at Tio Juan, if it be known to any, is known only to the confessor of Jean Rieske.

JESSICA SCREAMS

by Floyd Dell

NO premonitory vision of Jessica flashed on Jimmy Selden's mind as he tore open Murray Swift's letter. "Come down to Hazelton," it said, "and see me masquerading as a high school principal. I finished my series of one-act plays while I was in Vienna, despite some delightful interruptions, and I have an unpublishable poem I think you will be interested in, in your academic, sociological way. Come at once, for Hazelton bores me, and I wish to talk of myself. Hazelton, by the way, is in Indiana. I'll have some real cigarettes for you, and some apricot brandy that pleases me. Very well, then, I'll look for you."

Selden dropped the letter, and with a sigh started to pack a suitcase. Murray Swift's invitations were irresistible. Yet, as he left hurriedly to catch his train, he cast a pathetic look at his bookcases, full of the sociological books with which he improved his leisure. His eye caught the title of a book by Walter E. Weyl. It was symbolic, that volume of cheerful progressivism, of all that he was leaving. To go to Murray Swift was to turn his back on civic responsibility and venture into the wilds of human nature. The City Club bulletin there on the table had a reproachful look. He shut the door with a feeling that he was playing truant.

But Selden possessed the instincts of the disciple, and he had perforce for Murray Swift the reverence, mixed with astonishment and disapproval, which one might feel for a particularly disreputable minor prophet. It was in this attitude that he greeted Murray Swift—now half disguised by a little beard—at the station in Hazelton that evening, and listened to his characteristic flood of talk, half reminiscence and half philosophy, an astonishing mixture of personalities and generalities, until they reached the old house, standing imposingly back in a large yard, where Murray Swift said he lived.

"I am quartered here at the home of Judge Wyman. A justice of the peace; a funny, solemn old gander. Come on up!"

On the stairs they passed a young girl in a blue sailor suit. She smiled at Murray Swift, and demanded: "You're coming, aren't you?"

"Coming? Yes, yes. I forgot all about it."

They all paused on the stairs, and Selden looked curiously at the girl, while Murray Swift after a fashion introduced them, telling him that

she was the daughter of the house and one of his pupils. Her gaze burned at Selden eagerly for a moment, and then smoldered into indifference; and Selden, half awakened to some individual quality in her, turned again and looked down at her as she descended the stairs. But all he saw was the familiar appearance of a girl of fifteen with ribbons in her hair—the ordinary young girl as he had always known her.

Murray Swift hardly gave him a sight of his room, transformed, as he transformed every place he inhabited, into a villainous hole, with a litter of manuscript, notes, letters, accounts, books, newspapers, spilt tobacco and burnt matches. "We can talk tonight," said Swift, putting on a fresh collar. "It is part of the duty of a Hazelton high school principal to be present at such affairs"—it was a school party, it seemed—"and besides I like it. I am getting acquainted with America. It is only in a town with ten thousand inhabitants and a red brick high school that one can really see the character of the American people. It should be a great thing for an amateur sociologist like you. Tonight you will see—"

"I grew up in a small town," said Jimmy Selden drily.

"Yes, of course; and therefore never regarded with curiosity any of its phenomena. Curiosity is the corkscrew that makes a man free of the wine of life."

They started down the stairs. "I swear to you," said Murray Swift, taking his friend's arm, "that in the month I have been here I have not seen an extreme of any kind. No—I am mistaken. There is an Anarchist here—the man who keeps the jewelry store. There will be no jewelry, he assured me, the day after the Revolution. I fear he is not a good Anarchist. A mere reformer, like you. And there is a dance hall here, where I am told very scandalous scenes occur. I have not yet had time to investigate."

Somewhat out of breath with talking, Murray Swift guided his friend into the school yard. On their way up to the assembly room they passed on the stairs groups of young people who spoke to Murray Swift respectfully, as though he were a real high school principal. The assembly room itself, with its garniture of colored tissue paper festoons and a fantastic decoration in red and green chalk on the black board, had an air of pathetic gaiety. A few adults scattered among the younger people kept the occasion from assuming any specific quality, and it languished between ceremony and festivity.

Selden looked about for Jessica Wyman, but he did not see her.

On the teacher's desk he noted a pile of "boxes," now being auctioned off. It was a rather spiritless attempt to revive an old-fashioned "box social," but every young man seemed gloomily certain of getting the box belonging to the wrong girl. Deserted by Swift, who seemed to have some official duties in connection with this affair, Selden reconciled himself to the idea of sharing a box supper with one of those strange and discomforting creatures whom he had forgotten how to talk to. But, to his relief, he drew a fat and jolly widow, who conversed with him as one sensible human being with another.

But when he had run out of things to talk about he began to feel bored. The hum of talk, so different in its rhythm from that in a restaurant with its clustered group egotisms unconscious of each other—this subdued, half-embarrassed, ineffectual attempt at conversation wearied him. The festoons looked jaded; the room seemed to have given up hope for its occupants. Selden looked over to where Swift was standing apart, pulling at his little black beard and seeming to enjoy his sheer lack of enjoyment.

And then there burst out of the cloak-room—followed by a puff of girlish laughter, like the smoke that follows the bullet—Jessica Wyman, seeming in that moment very young and bold and full of life, as, in tune with some florid music that came from a mouth harp in the cloak-room, she became a wild, whirling, twisting, fantastic figure, executing some curious combination of the steps of the latest dances. Selden, staring, recognized the peculiar movements of the "tango," the strut of the "turkey trot," a suggestion of the "bear" and a recurrent reminiscence of the "Boston" whirl.

She tossed her arms, she swayed to and fro, she glided and writhed, abandoning her body to a vehement and rhythmical orgy of muscular expression.

The electric lights flickered, the steam pipes began to sing, and one giddy festoon in pure joy lost its hold and fell to the floor. Murray Swift stepped back out of the way, staring with a kind of delighted dismay. But on the rest of the company there fell a silence that was not the silence of appreciation. The girl danced her way across the front of the room, too full of her own pleasure to notice how it was being taken. But when she started her backward return to the cloak-room, she looked and saw. The pleasure went out of her eyes. Her steps faltered, and after a little effort to hold herself steady to the end, she broke down, and ran swiftly to the cloak-room.

Murray Swift was after her in an instant, and led her out as the baritone might the prima donna. The cue was taken, and the room applauded, but it was applause with a moral reservation in it. "Very clever, but—" it seemed to say.

Selden followed with his eyes as Murray Swift, talking earnestly, escorted her to a seat. She was very quiet now, and Selden noted her black hair and high cheek bones. She seemed like almost any fifteen-year-old girl, demure and quiet in the presence of her elders. That burst of dionysiac energy which she had shown a moment since seemed foreign to her.

On the way home, Murray Swift talked exclusively to her—he had sent her official beau packing, and bade her come home with him and Selden. It was curious talk for the most part, strangely impersonal.

"You belong," he told her, "to the middle class, and to the middle part of that. I haven't discovered the aristocracy here in Hazleton yet, but at least it gives its daughters tennis and horseback riding. And the girls at the other end of the social scale can go to that dance hall. But the daughter of Judge Wyman can't go. The fact is, you are extraordinarily hedged in. And you happen to be the sort of girl whose superabundant energies demand unusual freedom.

"Of course, you could ride a bicycle, or go rowing, or get up amateur theatricals; but unless you were given a sort of social permission to do these things heartily, wantonly, gloriously, they would be spoiled for you. Besides, you have a specific talent. You have a right to dance."

The girl brightened up at that last sentence, and put her hand confidently in the crook of his arm. Suddenly Selden stopped short.

"Wait a minute," he said. "Why not sit down a while?"

They had arrived at a tiny park, with benches scattered here and there beside the walks. It was warm for October, and the moonlight turned the spot of greensward into a place to linger in. They strolled over to a bench.

"I now begin to understand," said Murray Swift to his friend, "why you are called Jimmy instead of James. I have been unjust to you in my thoughts. I should have thought of this myself. Sometimes I fear that I am a mere theorist, after all."

As they sat down, Murray Swift turned to the girl. Her face took on in the moonlight an unwonted maturity of expression—it seemed to express the weariness of her soul with its continual failure to find ex-

pression. "Suppose," Murray Swift suddenly said to her, "I were to make love to you." She smiled.

"If you were a year or two older," he said, "I'd do it. But no—you are too carefully brought up."

"I have held hands," said Jessica candidly. "It's rather silly, isn't it?"

Murray Swift, taken rather aback, replied: "No, it is not that. I assure you it is not that. It is merely the banality of the Hazleton male which made it seem so. I congratulate you on making a start. You will find it interesting if properly cultivated. I advise you this in all sincerity. It is true that there are many other interesting things for a girl of your temperament to do, but you will not find any of them in Hazleton. That is your chief resource. Do not despise it."

Jessica was yawning. Murray Swift did not notice, absorbed as he was in talking.

"You are," he said, "what is sometimes called a tomboy. You are so unfortunate as to be neither rich nor poor, which means that you are a suppressed tomboy. You are living in a country which at best only tolerates tomboys, and at worst exploits them brutally."

Selden was looking at her, and seeing her with sharpened sight. Her black eyes, over which the eyelids drooped with languor, her petulant red mouth, were indeed the features of a child; but the mouth was just touched with a curious shade of sophistication, and the eyes had a faint expression in them of knowledge, rather than the wells of unplumbed ignorance which are childhood's. Selden looked at her face, with its high cheek bones, and the careless black hair that shaded it, at her young body that had just begun in bosom and thighs to take on the outlines of maturity, and it seemed to him that he was learning something about the "young girl" that he had never known before. He saw a strange compound, an unstable mixture of all the dangerous elements of childhood with a new and not less dangerous, though slighter, element of sex. In her blue sailor suit, with her girlish hair and pouting lips, she entered his imagination.

"Jessica," asked Murray Swift, "how, exactly, does Hazleton make you feel?"

"I want to scream," said Jessica. "*To scream!*" she repeated in a fierce whisper.

"Selden," said Murray Swift, "you and I were never made to set

things right. But this girl here, whom you doubtless regard as a child, is plainly different. She will do something. It will not succeed. No, it will not succeed. But it will be a reproach to me and to you, who do nothing—who do nothing but talk. But she is yawning! Come, let us go home."

On the way home, he said: "Jessica, I accept your rebuke. I talk too much. But I shall do something. I shall write a poem subversive of the morals of Hazleton."

"This is where I live," said Jessica drily, as they reached her front gate. They went in silence up the walk, and into the house. At the foot of the stairs she bade Selden good night, smiled a faint and possibly satirical smile at Murray Swift, and disappeared.

"Now," said Swift, "I want to show you that poem of mine. Sit over there on the couch. Here are the cigarettes."

Selden left the next morning, and did not see Jessica again until the next summer. He and Swift were at an amusement park in Chicago, where Swift—having been "fired" from his position in Hazleton—was loafing. It was a June afternoon—Sunday. Selden and Murray Swift had just come out of the smoke and roar of a "naval battle," when they passed what appeared to be a new "attraction." A small building had just been put up, and was not yet painted. Swift was halted by the appearance of a woman in the doorway—a fat woman, dressed as an Oriental dancer—and by the familiar and curiously alluring music which accompanies such dancing. He quickly bought tickets, and pushed Selden in.

The hall was packed; the aisles were full of standing people, and many stood on their seats. As they pushed their way to a place where they could see, they caught glimpses of a girl dressed in red, with multitudinous red petticoats, whirling on the stage, and heard some young women of the audience who were standing near the stage applaud and cheer her familiarly. There was a goodnatured flavor to the affair that could be sensed instantly. When, under Swift's energetic leadership, they reached the front, a man in Russian peasant costume, blue blouse and heavy boots, was doing a kind of dance in which he almost sat on the floor, throwing out his legs in a miraculous and very ugly fashion.

In a few moments this ended, and the show was over. Those who had not seen all the performance were invited to remain for the next period. As the audience filed out, Swift and Selden selected front row

seats. Several people, dressed in more or less Oriental-looking garb, came out of a little door beside the stage and started toward the outside. There was the fat woman whose fleshly promise had drawn them within. There was the man in the boots, now wearing a kind of Greek costume and carrying a drum. There was the villainous-looking Hindoo (or what you will) that they had seen outside taking tickets—all of the teeth in his wide and wicked mouth were of gold. Then came a man with a clarinet, or some such instrument; his affectation of the Orient did not go so far as to make him dispense with suspenders—he wore them along with a red sash. Then came a girl who looked like a department store clerk, with her ultra-large mass of puffs jutting back from her head; she wore a wine-colored dress and carried a tambourine. Following came the girl in red whom they had briefly seen before the curtain went down. All filed out to the entrance. And then, a little behind the rest, and running to catch up, came Jessica.

Decked out in tawdry Oriental finery, with a short skirt which showed the calves of her legs, a flush on her face under those high cheek bones, her black hair cut across the front to make an Egyptian bang, a laugh breaking from her throat, she was—though transformed—unmistakably Jessica.

She saw them, stopped with a glad laugh, and said: "Hello, hello! Say, come back and see me, will you? Soon as I get back. Bye-bye!" She waved at them, turned and dashed out through the entrance.

Selden looked at Swift.

"Well, I'll be damned!" Swift said.

"Well, what about this?" Selden demanded. "When did she leave Hazelton, and why?"

"Oh, she's been gone two or three months. She left shortly before I did. Disappeared."

"What!"

"Yes. Disappeared on her way to Indianapolis. And this is where she is! Well!"

The girls were being shown off outside, as, with faintly suggestive movements, and to "hoochee-coochee" music, they adumbrated the dances which would occur within. The house was filling rapidly.

"Good God!" cried Selden.

"Now don't be a fool," said Swift. "Wait and see what there is to see. Then make up your mind. Remember what I was going to tell her—that whatever she did would be right, even if it was wrong. This

is what she's done. Let's take a good look at it before we make up our minds."

Selden was thinking of the girl in the blue sailor suit there in that peaceful Hazleton house—of her standing there, bidding him good night at the foot of the stairs. She was only a child—she looked to be hardly seventeen even now. And here in such a place as this!

"Wait!" said Swift, noting his expression. "Don't be a fool."

The seats were all full, but it seemed that they wanted to pack the aisles. The Hindoo outside exhorted the crowd; the girls—they could get glimpses of them through the curtained doorway—wriggled to the music. The band came inside, the fat lady appeared and disappeared, and the crowd filtered in.

"*Ec-yah! Ec-ahh! E-yahh-ee!*"

The man with the drum was yelling—a yell of a piece with the music. A woman's voice took it up: "*Ec-yah-ee! Ah-ee!*"

Then came Jessica's voice, high, shrill, youthful, full of a strange sincerity and enthusiasm: "*Ah! Ec-ah! Ec-ah!*"

"Nobody ever got paid for yelling like that," said Swift. And then, as if to himself: "She wanted to scream."

That sound seemed more than anything else to excite the crowd outside, and the people began to pour in. Selden and Swift looked at the audience about them. This was composed of all kinds of people—young girls of eighteen, school teachers, middle-aged women, women with white hair, men of every age—all having in their eyes a kind of candid curiosity and expectation—all eager for some erotic spectacle, and seeming frankly to admit it to each other by their smiles. Selden noted a very large German woman, beaming good nature, in the middle of the front row. Her distinguished-looking husband, leaning on a gold-headed cane, looked about at everybody, and whispered witticisms in her ear, at which she laughed helplessly. A few rows back a young mother was nursing her baby at her breast. Two girls in the row behind pierced the lowered curtain with intense looks.

This new audience, like the last, seemed imbued with good nature. It exchanged merry glances and smiles. It applauded and stamped, all in good humor. And above all the din of clapping and stamping, of drum and tambourine and clarinet, and of the damnable iteration outside, rose the girl's yells, more and more prolonged: "*Ah! Ec-ah!*"

She was standing just inside the entrance, looking out as through a peephole; her profile was clearly outlined, and showed a wide-open—

oh, so wide-open—mouth, from which proceeded with unfailing zest this intoxicating scream, filled with the suggestion of unimaginable erotic violence. And yet it was not histrionic—it was noise for its own sake, for the sake of fun, as her face showed. She turned and struck pettishly at the man with the drum, who had been speaking slyly to her. Then she lifted her head, and her throat swelled and her bosom expanded under the volume of sound that burst forth in a last cry which might have been the primitive exultation of a young giantess. Then she ran down the aisle, past their seats, and up the steps into the dressing room. Swift was on her heels in a moment, and Selden followed. Once inside, she hailed them again, very eagerly, and then seemed to grow a little embarrassed.

"So this is what you did!" said Swift.

"Well, I've left Hazleton, too."

"See here," she said, looking from one to the other with a confident appeal. "You're not going to tell the folks in Hazleton, are you?"

"This man here thinks he ought to," said Swift. "But don't worry."

She turned to Selden with a look that was an assurance of complete trust in him. "You won't tell," she said, putting her hands on his shoulders.

"Here," said Swift, removing her hands, one after the other, "no fair seducing him. Let your life speak for itself."

She laughed. "I guess it does speak for itself!"

"You look happy," Selden suggested uncertainly.

She drew a breath, and stretched out her arms, and her face broke into that look they had seen on it while she was yelling—that look of glorious fun. She dropped her arms and nodded. "Yes," she said. The drum stopped beating outside.

"Here they come. It's about to start," she whispered.

"But what about these people?" Selden demanded.

"Oh, they're all right. I don't like that black devil out there on the platform, but the others are good fun. Yusuf is a picnic, except when he's drunk—he's the man with the drum. Steve is nice, too. Bertha is a fool. And that fat old Fatima—" She made a face.

At that moment these people began to climb the stairs into the dressing room, with the exception of the black devil, who remained outside. Yusuf glared at the strangers, and the man who must by elimination be Steve looked them over critically. Steve was a lean-faced New

Englander. The little room was furnished with a mirror, a chair and an unpainted kitchen table, on which lay some boxes of cosmetics; on the wall and on the floor, too, were clothes, men's and women's; the little company could scarcely all be contained in so small a space.

Jessica said, "See you later," and motioned them out.

The girl in red, to whom Jessica had given no name or comment, had lifted her skirts to adjust something, and Selden glimpsed again her scarlet underclothing as they backed out.

Their seats were gone, but they were in front. The curtain went up, showing a mongrel Turko-Greek room, with a divan, on the middle of which, her lips parted in the gayest of smiles, sat Jessica—a Sultan's favorite, no doubt. On chairs ranged against the side wall sat Yusuf, with his boots and drum, and Steve, in suspenders and red sash, holding his clarinet. On a sort of stool in the corner was Bertha, with her department store puffs and her vacuous look, a tambourine in her lap.

Yusuf raised his drumsticks, Steve put the clarinet to his lips, and Bertha lifted her tambourine. And as these all broke into music, there pranced into the room that great fat woman whom they had first noticed at the door.

Afterward they understood what Jessica meant by calling her Fatima. It was stated on the posters outside that she was the original St. Louis Exposition Turkish dancer. Probably she was. (It was also stated outside that the show was "strictly moral and clean, refined—ladies and children invited.") But the St. Louis Exposition was some years ago. It was the coarsened relic of that Turkish dancer, coarsened and augmented, that they saw before them. She was a skillful muscle dancer, and the rhythmic waves of muscle that rippled and danced over her shapeless body were impressive in one way; but if (as Swift would have pointed out) there is anything in this world which may legitimately be erotic, it is the *danse du ventre*; and a fat woman, by the mere exaggeration of these various features of her sex, many seem in such a dance the very expression of it: but this woman was so swathed in fat that it seemed no sex remained in her.

She stood almost still, a mass of undulating fat and muscle. The audience looked at her with a mingling of curiosity and derision. The music sounded wildly beside her, and on the divan behind, the girl with the high cheek bones, the little black-eyed bride of the Sultan, opened a red mouth and cried in a high voice that seemed to have in it an accent of mockery:

"La Belle Fatima! La Belle Fatima!"

After that dance was finished, and La Belle Fatima had gone into the dressing room—and thence to the front door, to eclipse her own posters—the girl jumped down from the divan, ran to the front of the little stage and commenced to dance the same dance to the same music.

She did not have a tithe of the skill of the older woman, but she had a beautiful body, and she mixed the magic of sex with the abandon of youth. Her dance was an effulgent giving of herself to her audience. And when at last, in a sort of rhythmic paroxysm, she shook her torso with a violent motion that transmitted itself to her young breasts, she turned what should have seemed an ugliness into a symbol of sexuality that intoxicated the audience. She saw her triumph, and exulted in it—but exulted with a kind of wild sexless mirth, the sheer mad effrontery of youth.

Her dance was over. Bertha was there in the center of the stage. As the music started, she whirled rapidly around—and the audience shouted with laughter, at the sight of an extraordinarily large pair of legs. From the ankles up they broadened amazingly. Selden stared a moment at them, and then he saw Jessica come down the steps from the dressing room and dart out the side door, with a glance at him and Swift.

They found her just outside, standing on the little strip of green that separated the little building from the snake charmer's tent next door. Selden was perturbed. He still had the impulse to seize her and crush her in his arms. She turned to him, searching his face with bold eyes. What she saw there seemed to satisfy her, for she turned to Swift.

"And you?" she demanded. "What do you think?"

"I'm wondering," said Swift. "In a way I'm responsible for this. I remember that I told you—"

She went up close to him. "You won't tell on me, will you?" she asked.

"Suppose I did?" parried Swift.

"I know," said the girl, with a glance that made plain her meaning. "You want to be paid for being good. All right, then, be around here"—her voice was very low—"tonight when we close up." She stepped back. "I've got to go out in front now. Good-by!"

The two young men sustained that disturbing glance, full of the blazing audacity of youth, and shot through with the allure of sex, for a moment, and then she was gone.

"Well," said Selden, "you've made a hit with her. I wish you a pleasant evening!"

"I'm going home," announced Swift, "and rewrite that chapter. I've just got an idea." And he started off.

So Jimmy Selden did not know what Murray Swift had done until two weeks later, when they met again, and Swift told him. Then he was aghast. "You fool!" he cried, "You Judas!"

For Murray Swift, sick at heart, had telegraphed Jessica's father. That night she slept in the police station. A few days later she was sent to an "institution" where girls are reformed by being made to work in a laundry for ten hours a day, together with religious instruction. Jessica's father had followed the expert advice of the police matron and the police magistrate, and hoped to see her emerge a "good girl."

THE DEAD ARE SILENT

by Arthur Schnitzler

HE could not bear sitting in the carriage any longer; he got out and walked up and down. It was already dark; the few street lamps in this quiet side street flickered in the wind. It had stopped raining, and the sidewalks were almost dry; but the streets were still wet, and here and there a puddle had formed.

It's strange, thought Franz, how here, but a hundred feet away from the Praterstrasse, one can imagine oneself in a little Hungarian town. In any case, it was safe here; for in this street she would not be liable to meet any of her acquaintances.

He looked at his watch. Seven o'clock, and night had fallen already. An early autumn this year! And the cursed rain!

He pulled up his collar and walked up and down more quickly. The panes in the street lamps rattled. "A half-hour more," he murmured to himself, "and if she's not here then, I can go. Ah, I almost wish that that half-hour were up." He remained standing at the corner; for here he had a commanding view of the two streets, on either of which she might come.

Yes, today she'll come, he thought, as he held on to his hat, which

threatened to blow away. Friday—Faculty meeting—then she'll dare come, and will even stay longer. He heard the ringing of the horse cars; and now the church bells began to ring. The street became more lively. More people passed and it seemed to him that they were mostly shopgirls and clerks. All of them walked quickly, and seemed to be fighting the storm. No one paid any attention to him; only two shopgirls gazed curiously up at him. Suddenly he saw a familiar figure hurrying toward him. He went quickly to meet her. Not in a carriage? Was it she?

It was; and as she became aware of him, she walked more slowly.

"You come on foot?" he asked.

"I discharged my carriage before we reached this street, because I think I've had the same coachman before."

A man walked past and gave her a cursory glance. The young man stared at him, almost threateningly. He hurried on. The woman followed him with her eyes.

"Who was it?" she asked, frightened.

"I don't know him. You'll meet none of your acquaintances here, so you can rest easy. But come more quickly, and get into the carriage."

"Is it yours?"

"Yes."

"Is it open?"

"An hour ago the weather was ideal."

They hurried to the waiting carriage, and got in.

"Driver!" called the young man.

"Where has he gone to?" the young woman asked.

Franz looked all about. "It's unbelievable," he cried, "I don't see the fellow anywhere."

"For heaven's sake!" she cried softly.

"Wait a minute, dear; he must be here."

He opened the door of the little inn; the driver was sitting at a table with some other people. Now he rose quickly.

"Right here, sir!" he cried, and finished his glass of grog standing up.

"What in the deuce has got into you, to keep us waiting like this?"

"Excuse me, sir. But I'm right with ye now."

Swaying a little from side to side, he hurried to the carriage.

"Where d'ye want to drive, sir?"

"The Prater!"

The young man got in. His companion lay huddled up in the corner.

Franz took both of her hands in his. She remained immobile. "Well, won't you at least say good evening to me?"

"Please let me alone for just a few moments. I'm still quite out of breath."

He leaned back in his corner. Both were silent for a while. The carriage had turned into the Praterstrasse, had passed the Tegethoff Monument, and in a few seconds was flying down the dark Praterallee. Suddenly Emma threw her arms about her lover. He quickly raised the veil that separated her lips from his, and kissed her.

"At last I'm with you!" she said.

"Do you know how long it has been since we have seen one another?" he asked.

"Since Sunday."

"Yes, and then only from afar."

"Why, what do you mean? You were at our house."

"Well, yes—at your house. But this can't go on. I'm never going to your house again. But what's the matter with you?"

"A carriage just passed by."

"Dear child, the people who are driving in the Prater today aren't really going to bother about us."

"That I believe. But one of our friends might see us."

"That's impossible. It's too dark to recognize anyone."

"Please let us drive somewhere else."

"As you wish."

He called to the driver, but the latter did not seem to hear. Then he leaned forward and touched him with his hand. The coachman turned around.

"You're to turn back. . . . And why are you whipping your horses like that? We're in no hurry, do you hear! Drive to the—you know, the street that leads to the Reichs bridge."

"Yes, sir."

"And don't go driving like mad. There's no sense in that."

"Excuse me, sir, but it's the weather that makes them horses go so wild."

They turned back.

"Why didn't I see you yesterday?" she suddenly asked.

"How could you?"

"Why, I thought that my sister had invited you also."

"She did."

"And why didn't you come?"

"Because I cannot bear to be with you when others are around. No, never again!"

She shrugged her shoulders.

"Where are we?" she then asked.

They were driving under the railroad bridge into the Reichsstrasse.

"That's the road to the Danube," said Franz. "We're on the way to the Reichs bridge. You'll meet none of your friends here," he added in a jesting tone.

"The carriage is swaying terribly."

"That's because we're driving over cobble stones."

"But why does he drive in such zigzags?"

"You think he does!"

But he himself thought that they were being tossed about much more violently than was necessary. He did not, however, want to alarm her.

"I have some serious things to talk to you about today, Emma."

"Then you'll have to begin right away, because I have to be home by nine o'clock."

"All can be settled in two words."

"My God, what's that?" she suddenly cried. The carriage had been running in the car tracks, and now, as the coachman was trying to get out, it hung for a moment at such an angle that it almost overturned. Franz seized the driver by his cloak, and cried: "Will you stop! Why, you're drunk!"

With effort the horses were brought to a standstill.

"But, sir—"

"Come, Emma, let us get out here."

"Where are we?"

"At the bridge already. It's not so stormy now, so let us walk a bit. We can't really talk in a carriage."

Emma lowered her veil and followed.

"You don't call this stormy!" she exclaimed, as a gust of wind whirled about her.

He took her arm. "Follow us," he called to the driver.

They walked on ahead. When they heard the water rushing below them, they stopped. It was pitch dark. The broad river looked like a boundless expanse of gray. In the distance they saw red lights, which appeared to sway over the river and reflect themselves on its bosom.

The lights on the bank which they had just left seemed to be dissolving themselves into the water. Now faint thunder, which came nearer and nearer, was audible. Both looked at the spot where the red lights shone. Trains with lighted windows came out of the night and disappeared again. The thunder gradually subsided, and, except for an occasional gust of wind, quiet reigned.

After a long silence, Franz said: "We ought to go away."

"Of course," Emma answered softly.

"We ought to go away," Franz repeated with animation. "I mean far away."

"It can't be done."

"Because we're cowards. That's why it can't be done."

"And my child?"

"I'm positive that he'd let you take him."

"And how shall we do it?" she asked softly. "Steal away in the dead of night?"

"No, certainly not. All you have to do is simply tell him that you can't live with him any longer because you belong to another."

"Are you out of your mind, Franz?"

"If you prefer, I'll spare you that, too. I'll tell him myself."

"You'll not do that, Franz."

He tried to see her face, but all he noticed was that she had lifted her head and had turned it toward him.

He was silent for a while. Then he said quietly: "Don't be afraid. I'll not do it."

They were now approaching the other shore.

"Don't you hear something?" she asked. "What is it?"

"It comes from over there."

Slowly it came from out of the night. A small red light. Soon they saw it shone from a lantern tied to the front part of a peasant's cart. But they could not see whether anyone was in the wagon. Right in back of it lumbered two other carts. On the last they made out a man in peasant's dress, who was lighting his pipe. The wagons drove by. Then they heard nothing but the slow movement of the carriage, which kept about twenty paces ahead of them. Now the bridge gradually sank to the level of the other shore. They saw how the street ran on, between rows of trees, into the night. On both sides of them lay meadows, which looked like deep abysses.

After a long silence Franz suddenly said: "Well, this is the last time."

"What?" asked Emma in a worried tone.

"That we'll be together. Stay with him. I'll say good-bye to you."

"Are you in earnest?"

"Absolutely."

"Now you see that it is always you who spoil the few hours we spend together, and not I."

"Yes, yes; you're right," said Franz. "Come, let's drive back."

She held his arm more firmly. "No," she said tenderly, "not now. I'm not going to let you send me away like that."

She drew him down toward her and kissed him. "If we kept right on this road where should we get to?"

"Prague, my dear."

"Well, we won't go that far," she replied, smiling. "But let's go on a bit further, if you don't mind."

"Hey, driver!" called Franz.

The carriage rolled on. Franz ran after it. Now he saw that the driver had fallen asleep. By calling loudly enough, Franz finally succeeded in waking him.

"We're going to drive a little further along this straight road. Do you understand me?"

"Yes, sir; all right, sir."

They stepped in; the coachman whipped up the horses, and they raced down the muddy road. The couple in the carriage were folded in each other's arms while they were tossed from one side to the other.

"Now isn't this really very nice?" Emma whispered, with her lips almost touching his.

At this moment it seemed to her as if the carriage had shot up into the air. She felt herself hurled out; she tried to seize hold of something, and only clawed in the air. It seemed to her that she spun round and round in a circle at such a speed that she must close her eyes. Then she felt herself lying on the ground, and a terrible heavy quiet hung over her, as if she were all alone, far away from the world. Presently she heard noises: horses' hoofs pawing the ground near her, and a soft whinnying; but she could see nothing. A terrible fear gripped her; she cried out, and her fear became greater, for she could not hear her own voice. All of a sudden, she knew exactly what had happened: the carriage had hit something, probably a milestone, had overturned, and

they had been thrown out. Where was Franz? She called his name. And she heard her voice—very vaguely—but she heard it. There was no answer. She tried to rise. She was able to sit up, and as she put forth her two hands she felt a human body next to her. And now, as her eyes had become accustomed to the darkness, she could see more clearly. Franz lay on the ground, motionless. She touched his face with her hand, and felt something warm and damp flowing over it. She caught her breath. Blood! Franz was wounded and unconscious. And the driver—where was he? She called to him. No answer. She was still sitting on the ground. Nothing had happened to her, she thought, although she felt pains in all parts of her body.

"Franz!" she called.

A voice close by answered:

"Where are ye, miss? And where's the gentleman? Nothing's happened, has it? Wait a minute, miss; I'll light one of the lamps so as we can see better. I don't know what's got into them horses today. It ain't my fault, as true's I'm living."

Emma had risen by this time in spite of her pains, and she was relieved to find that the coachman was not injured. She heard him open the lamp and strike a match. In terrible fear she waited for the light. She did not dare touch Franz again, who lay stretched out on the earth. A ray of light came from the side. She saw the carriage, which, to her surprise, was not quite overturned, but was lying up against the main drain, as if one of the wheels had come off. The horses were standing stock still. The light came nearer; she watched it as it crept over a milestone, over the stone heap, then on Franz's feet, on his body and, finally on his face, where it remained. The driver had placed the lamp on the ground beside Franz's head. Emma knelt down, and when she saw his face, it seemed as if her heart stopped beating. His face was pale; his eyes were half open, and only the whites were visible. From the right temple trickled a small stream of blood, which, passing over the cheek, lost itself under the collar. His teeth had bitten into his lower lip.

"It isn't possible!" Emma murmured to herself.

The coachman was also on his knees, staring at the face. Then he took hold of the head with both of his hands and raised it.

"What are you doing?" screamed Emma, and recoiled from the head, which seemed to rise of its own accord.

"It looks to me, miss, like an awful accident."

"It isn't true," said Emma. "It can't be true. Did anything happen to you? And me—"

The driver slowly lowered the head of the unconscious man into Emma's lap. She trembled.

"If only somebody'd come . . . if only them peasants had come a quarter of an hour ago—"

"What shall we do?" Emma asked, her lips trembling.

"Yes, miss, if that there carriage only weren't broken—But now we've simply got to wait till someone comes."

He went on talking, but Emma was not listening. She regained control of her thoughts, and knew how to act.

"How far is it to the nearest house?" she asked.

"Not far, miss. We're almost in Franz Josefsland. We'd see the houses if it was light. It's only about five minutes away."

"Well, you go and get help. I'll stay here."

"Yes, miss. But I think it'd be better if I stayed here with you. It won't be long 'fore somebody is sure to turn up."

"Then it may be too late. We need a doctor."

The driver looked at the face of the motionless man; then he looked at Emma, shaking his head.

"That you can't know," cried Emma, "nor I either."

"Yes, miss . . . but where'll I find a doctor in Franz Josefsland?"

"From there someone can go to the city, and—"

"D'ye know what, miss: they've probably got telephones there, and I could call an ambulance."

"Yes, that's the best thing to do. But hurry up, for heaven's sake! And bring help, and please go now this minute. Why, what are you doing?"

The driver was looking at the pale face in Emma's lap.

"Ambulance—doctor! It's too late for them to do any good!"

"Oh, please go now! For God's sake, go!"

"I'll go all right. Only, don't get scared here in the dark, miss."

He hurried off down the street and Emma was alone with the inanimate body in the dark street.

It wasn't possible—that thought kept going through her head. Of a sudden she seemed to feel someone breathing right next to her. She leaned over, and looked at the white lips. No, there was no breath coming from them. The blood on the temple and the cheek had dried. She looked at the eyes, and trembled. This was death! There was a

dead man on her lap! And with shaking hands she raised the head and placed it on the ground. A terrible feeling of abandonment came over her. Why had she sent the driver away? How foolish of her! What should she do here on the highroad with a corpse? If anyone should come along. . . . What would she do if any people came along? She looked at the dead man again. The light of the lamp seemed to her kind and friendly, for which she ought to be thankful. She gazed at it so long that her eyes blinked, and everything began to dance before her. Suddenly she had the sensation of being awakened. She jumped up! She couldn't be found here with him! What was she waiting for?

Voices were now audible in the distance.

"Already?" she thought. She listened, fearfully. The voices came from the direction of the bridge. Those could not be the people whom the coachman had gone to get. But whoever they were, they would certainly notice the light—and that could not be, for then she would be discovered.

She kicked the lamp over. The light was extinguished. Now she was in total darkness. She did not see him any more. The voices came nearer. Only the white stone heap was visible now. She now began to tremble in her whole body. Not to be discovered there—that was the important thing! She was lost if anyone found out that she had had a liaison. . . . But the people passed on. . . . And now. . . . She would have to go to the police station, and everybody would find it out—and her husband—and her child!

Then she realized that she had been standing as if rooted to the ground, that she could go away, that by staying she would only bring unhappiness upon herself. She took a step. Soon she was in the middle of the street. She looked ahead and saw the outlines of the long, gray road. There—there was the city. She could not see it, but she knew the direction. Once more she turned around. She could see the horses and the carriage; and when she tried very hard, she could make out something that looked like the outline of a human body, stretched out on the ground. . . . With all her might she tore herself away. The ground was wet, and the mud had sucked in her shoes. She walked faster. . . . she ran back—into the light, the noise and the people! The street seemed to run toward her, and she held up her skirt in order to keep from falling. The wind was at her back, and it seemed to be driving her ahead. She remembered that she was fleeing from living people who must now be at the spot, and also looking for her. What would they

think? But no one could possibly guess who the woman was with the man in the carriage. The driver did not know her, and he would never be able to recognize her if he saw her. It was very wise that she did not stay; and it was not wrong of her to have left. Franz himself would have said that she was in the right.

She hurried toward the city, whose lights she saw under the railroad bridge at the end of the street. Just this one lonely street and then she would be safe. She heard a shrill whistling in the distance; growing shriller, drawing nearer. A wagon flew past. Involuntarily she stopped and watched it. It was the ambulance, and she knew its destination. "Now, quick!" she thought. It was like magic. . . . For a moment she had the most terrible feeling of shame she had ever experienced. She knew that she had been cowardly. But as the whistling grew fainter, a wild joy seized her, and she rushed on. People came toward her; she was not afraid of them any more—the worst was over. The noise of the city became more audible, and there was more light; already she saw the rows of houses on the Praterstrasse, and it seemed to her as if she were being expected there by a crowd of people in which she could disappear without leaving a trace behind her. As she came under a street lamp she was calm enough to look at her watch. It was ten minutes of nine. It seemed to her as if she were entirely forgiven, as if none of the blame had been hers. She was a woman—and she had a child and a husband. She had done right: it was her duty. Had she stayed she would have been discovered. And the newspapers! She would have been ostracized forever! . . . There was the Tegethoff Monument where many streets meet. There were very few people abroad, but to her it seemed as if the whole life of the city were whirling about her. She had time. She knew that her husband would not be home till nearly ten—she even had time to change her clothes! She looked at her dress: it was covered with mud. What would she tell her maid? It went through her head that a full account of the accident would be in all the morning papers. And it would tell of the woman who was in the carriage at the time of the accident, and then could not be found. These thoughts made her tremble again—an imprudent thing, and all her cowardice had been for nought. But she had her key with her; she need not ring the bell. She would be quiet and no one would hear her. She got hurriedly into a carriage. She was about to give the coachman her address, when she thought that that would be unwise, and she gave him the name of the first street that came into her head. She had but

one wish: to be safe at home. Nothing else made any difference. She was not heartless. Yet she was sure that days would come when she would doubt, and perhaps that doubt would ruin her; but now her only desire was to be at home, dry-eyed, at the table with her husband and child. The carriage was driving through the inner city. She stopped in a side street off the Ring, got out of the carriage, hurried round the corner, got into another carriage, and gave her right address to the driver. She was incapable of even thinking any more. She closed her eyes, and the carriage began to shake. She was afraid of being thrown out as before, and screamed. Then the carriage came to a stop in front of her home. She hurriedly got out, and quickly, with soft steps, passed the porter's window so that she would not be noticed. She ran up the stairs, softly opened the door . . . through the hall into her bedroom—it was done! She turned on the light, tore off her clothes and hid them in a closet. They would dry overnight—tomorrow she would brush them herself. Then she washed her hands and face, and put on a dressing gown.

Then the doorbell rang. She heard the maid going to the door. She heard her husband's voice, and she heard his cane rattle in the umbrella jar. She felt that she must be strong or all would have been in vain. She hurried into the dining room so that she entered at the same moment that her husband did.

"You're at home already?" he asked.

"Surely," she answered. "I've been here quite a while."

"The maid didn't see you come in." She smiled without trying. But it tired her to smile. He kissed her on the brow.

Their little boy was already at the table. He had had to wait long and had fallen asleep. His book was on the plate, and his face rested on the open book. She sat down next to him, her husband opposite. He picked up a newspaper and glanced through it, then put it down and said:

"The others are still at the meeting, discussing things."

"What?" she asked.

And he started to tell her of the meeting. Emma pretended that she was listening, and kept nodding her head.

But she heard nothing; she did not know what he was speaking about. She felt as one who had wonderfully escaped from some terrible danger. As her husband talked, she moved her chair nearer to her son, and pressed his head against her breast. A feeling of great weariness

crept over her. She could not control herself; she felt that sleep was overpowering her, and she closed her eyes.

Suddenly a thought flashed through her mind that had not occurred to her since she picked herself up out of the ditch. If he were not dead after all! If he should say to the doctors, "There was a woman with me, and she must have been thrown out also." What then?

"What is the matter?" asked the professor earnestly, as he looked up.

"Why . . . why—the matter!"

"Yes, what *is* the matter with you?"

"Nothing!" She pressed her boy close to her breast.

The professor looked at her for a long while, silently.

"Do you know that you began to doze, and suddenly cried out?"

". . . Really?"

"Yes, as if you had had a bad dream. Were you dreaming?"

"I really don't know. . . ."

She saw her image in the mirror, smiling horribly. Her face was all drawn. She knew that it was herself, but she shrank away from it. Her face had become fixed and she could not move her mouth. She tried to cry out. Then she felt two hands on her shoulders, and she noticed that the face of her husband had come between her and the mirror; his eyes, questioning, threatening, sank into hers. She knew that if she did not stand this last test, all was lost. She felt that she was regaining her strength; she had entire control of herself, and she knew that she must make use of this valuable moment. She took her husband's arms from her shoulders, drew him toward her, and gazed at him, gaily and tenderly.

As she felt her husband's lips on her brow she thought: "Surely . . . a bad dream. He must be dead . . . *and the dead are silent.*"

"Why did you say that?" she suddenly heard her husband ask.

"What did I say?" And it seemed to her as if she had told the whole story aloud, and once more she asked, as she faltered under his stern gaze:

"What did I say?"

"The dead are silent," he repeated, very slowly.

"Yes . . ." she said. "Yes . . ." But she read in his eyes that she could not hide anything more from him.

They gazed at each other for a long time.

"Put the boy to bed," he said to her. "I think you have something more to tell me."

"Yes," she answered.

She knew that in a few minutes she was going to tell this man, whom she had deceived for years, the whole truth.

And, as she slowly went out through the door with her son and felt her husband's eyes upon her, a feeling of quiet stole over her, as if everything was going to be put to rights again. . . .

A DEAD ONE

by Witter Bynner

God, but my feet are sore!—
And the men all hurry by.
I used to pick up one or more
On any street I'd try. . . .

I'm down and out, I am—
A dead one, that's my name.
And you don't need a diagram
For a grave hole for this dame.

But I'll take my finish quick,
And I'll take my whiskey neat . . .
Well, I don't care. The whiskey's thick,
And it'll ease my feet.

Let's see: Which one was first?
I think his name was Clem. . . .
Two others caught me like a thirst—
I can't remember them.

And that's the way it goes;
Something has snapped inside.
Those three! When I'm forgetting those,
I guess my soul has died . . .

"It's not too late," they say;
"Jesus can make me whole."
He had the chance. But He wouldn't pay
Five dollars for my soul.

REPORT OF A SUNDAY EVENING TALK AT A SANATORIUM FOR FEMALE ALCOHOLICS

By a Traveling Lecturer Who, Owing to Some
Confusion of Schedule, Thinks He Is Addressing a
Women's Society of Tennyson Admirers on the
Anniversary of the Death of the Poet

by Christopher Morley

My dear ladies:

Among the potent spirits that we love to celebrate there was never any more ardent than the one you and I are so familiar with. The memory of that enkindling spirit is precious to us, its fragrance and stimulation come to us from the still—er, the stillness—and though the chalice is broken and the bar is crossed for the last time, we may yet console ourselves in the hope of a future glorious reunion beyond the swinging doors.

[Restlessness in the audience, and shrill squeaks of laughter from one or two excitable patients.]

How long it seems—nay, how long it is!—since that fine spirit was among us. How long I might decant—er, descant—upon the effervescence of his youth, when dreaming by the bier of his dear friend, "too full for sound or foam," he cried:

*O father, wheresoe'er thou be,
Who pledgest now thy gallant son,
A shot, ere half thy draught be done,
Hath stilled the life that beat from thee.*

*If one should bring me this report,
That thou hadst touched the land today,
And I went down unto the quay
And found thee lying in the port—*

*The man we loved was there on deck,
But thrice as large as man he bent
To greet us. Up the side I went,
And fell in silence on his neck—*

*Let all my genial spirits advance
To meet and greet a whiter sun;
My drooping memory will not shun
The foaming grape of eastern France.*

[*Prolonged applause.*]

I see how these noble and poignant lines thrill you with a thirst for what was once and now, alas, can never be again!

And then, mellowed and softened by the passing years, our patron spirit utters this convivial summons:

*The Muse, the jolly Muse it is!
She answered to my call;
She changes with that mood or this
Is all-in-all to all;
She lit the spark within my throat,
To make my blood run quicker,
Used all her fiery will, and smote
Her life into the liquor!*

[*One partially cured inebriatrix has to be removed by an attendant. Symptoms of deep agitation among others.*]

Ladies, I see with emotion how you are moved by these great words. Your president, in urging me to say when [*Sensation*] I could be with you gave me no inkling that it would be my privilege to address so responsive an audience. I cannot urge you too strongly to cultivate your appetite for this kind of thing, for it is in these copious reservoirs that true joy is to be found. Fortify yourselves with deep draughts [*Signs of hysteria in the audience*] of this magnificent poesy, distilled by divine inspiration from the fiery cisterns—I beg your pardon, I mean sisters—of the Muse. It has been thought too often that Alfred Tennyson was but a soft and melodious minstrel quaffing an easy vintage of bourgeois success, and many beery wenches—your pardon, I mean weary benches—in public houses—er, public halls—have listened to that fallacious doctrine. It is true that he availed himself of the true poet's license to speak easy. [*Three patients swoon.*]

Ladies, your enthusiasm thrills me. Rarely have I known so cordial [*Commotion*] ahem—generally literary societies are too prone to malt and hock, er, to halt and mock—But to resume:

He poured out his spirits in generous and fiery fashion. On one

occasion he treated Queen Victoria [*Uproar—several words lost by stenographer*] many of these show the highest proof of supernatural, I might almost say denatured, genius. His utterance is of course sometimes obscure: as we might say, to some of these poems there is no family entrance [*Prolonged uproar*]. For instance, the Lady of Shalott,

*On either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye—*

or that extraordinary tavern poem "The Vision of Sin," where the poet addresses the wizened tapster—

*Let me screw thee up to a peg;
Let me loose thy tongue with wine;
Callest thou that thing a leg?
Which is thinnest, thine or mine?*

[*Hysterical screams from the audience.*]

Ladies, your enthusiasm is most gratifying; it is really quite intoxicating. Just a word as to the poet's private life. He came from the land-lord class; in person he was stout and never known to ail [*Cries of "Here's bow!"*]. He never knew what pain was, nor did he sham pain [*Yells*]. He was among the best sellers all his life, and in his youth he was always stewed [*Screams and ejaculations*]*—*always studious. His character might be called half and half—half convivial, half ascetic. As he himself put it,

*And let there be no moaning at the bar
When I—*

And as one of his loveliest verses exclaims—

Absinthe makes the heart grow fonder.

One of his favorite exclamations was the utterance of Omar, as translated by his friend FitzGerald:

*O thou who didst with pitfall and with gin
Beset the path I was to wander in—*

Queen Victoria thought so highly of his poems that she once summoned him to her private saloon [*Shrieks of "Prosit!"*] at Windsor to read some of them to her. He sauterne [*agitation*]*—*he so turned his verses that she appointed him poet laureate, remarking that his work was full of punch.

Of course, as you know, Tennyson predicted and foresaw the Great

War. He says, "For I dipped into the future, far as human eye could see," in a very famous poem. Dipping into the future was a favorite pastime with him—almost a mania. A dipsomania, in fact. [*Several patients become delirious.*] That reminds me of an anecdote of my small son. The first time he picked up a volume of Tennyson he was much struck by the words on the title page: Alfred Tennyson, Bart. "Daddy," he asked me, "What does that Bart. stand for—Bartender?" [*Irrepressible uproar. The audience is quite beyond control. Curtain.*]

NOT GUILTY

by Llewelyn Powys

NO, I have never deceived a living man but, by Jove! I came near doing so on one occasion.

I was staying in a Swiss sanatorium, in one of those colossal oblong buildings fretted with balconies that look so square and incongruous on the mountainside. Life in such places is intolerable.

Day after day I did nothing and thought of nothing; one was in the world and yet not in the world, forsaken, abandoned, on its topmost ledge. It is in these huge hospitals for the rich that half the degenerates of Europe congregate, hoping to eke out an ebbing and worthless vitality. With such people as companions my existence was insufferable. If I went for a walk there was never anything to be seen, the landscape was always the same—fir trees and perpetual snow-covered mountains—that was all. As for the Swiss peasantry—I loathed them; they seemed to me to spend all their time smoking monstrous pipes, yodelling grotesquely and leading from chalet to chalet ridiculous mouse-coloured cows.

Yet even in sanatoriums there may still be found one consolation—For women also, luckily for us, sometimes fall sick. I was not seriously ill and had good prospects of returning to England for the summer months; yet, even so, I cast my eye round for some girl who might enliven the wretchedness of my exile.

I had reached that moment in a young man's life when the desire for amorous adventure is overwhelming, when he can think of nothing else and is ready to follow up any acquaintanceship that seems at all promising.

Well, one day, as I was resting on a green sanatorium seat half-way along the mountain path, another Englishman came up and seated himself at my side. He, poor devil, was very ill. How he had managed to walk so far I don't know: report said that he suffered from a weak heart and might die at any time. After a fit of coughing he told me he had just received a letter from his wife, saying she was coming to him. He could speak only in a whisper because the disease had attacked his throat, but even so I seemed to detect in his utterance that particular kind of pride which belongs to a man who has secured for himself a beautiful and superior woman.

He himself was not a gentleman. He had made his money by manufacturing boots—brown boots—which he had always assured us were the best in the market.

We treated him abominably, with the silent insolence which the upper classes adopt toward inferiors who happen to stray amongst them. He was made to feel out of it, I can tell you.

When I was introduced to his wife I certainly thought her an amazing person. I shall never forget the look in her eyes as we shook hands—a look that seemed to estimate my capacity for giving her diversion—a look provocative, defiant, and at the same time ironic. She belonged to the spoilt pussy-cat type, to the type of women who have no soul and who strangle men daily with languid caresses.

That very evening when "her old man," as she called him, had gone to bed, we sat talking together in the vestibule. She had evidently taken a fancy to me, for she was extraordinarily gracious.

"I know your thoughts," her eyes seemed to say. "You find me attractive—very well then, be bold and treacherous and you shall have me." Even to this day I recall the intoxicating aura of her presence, dressed as she was in silk of Prussian blue that rustled at her least movement and had about it the faint, delicious fragrance of a lady's toilet.

As the days passed I fell more and more under her spell: the tedium of my life vanished—vanished, as it always does vanish, when one is attracted by a woman. She completely fascinated me. Her feminine wit, her chance expressions, her lovely attitudes—I could not resist them.

You know how the personality of a clever woman finds expression for itself in all the petty incidents of daily life. It was so with her—she was always charming. At meal times I would sometimes look across

to her table, but with laughing eyes she always contrived to hide behind a vase of tulips. I can never see these flowers in the beds at home without thinking of her exquisite and perfidious beauty.

The manufacturer was obviously flattered by the impression his wife had made and would ask me up to his rooms to drink coffee and liqueurs before we settled down to our afternoon's rest. He used on these occasions to make pathetic efforts to forget the misery of his predicament, but all the time as he whispered and laughed his features wore that curious harassed expression which I have noticed before on the faces of dying consumptives.

I have seen scores of consumptives like him. They become unaccountably preoccupied, their souls seem to sling to the remotest corners of their bodies, reappearing only at the rarest intervals to wave wild, supplicating hands out of the windows of their eyes. His wife would often rally him and call him stupid because of his depression. Her incapacity to understand the bitterness of his situation was a constant astonishment to me. It is no joke for a man who has lived only for the world and its ways suddenly to find himself dying, to realize all in a moment the ghastly and fatal conditions which regulate human existence.

Yet the slightest allusions to the graver aspects of his case were deliberately and persistently ignored. One day after luncheon she asked me up to coffee as usual. Her husband had not been down that morning and she assured me that my presence would cheer him up.

"His temper and temperature are both out of order," she added with a laugh.

I opened the lift door and we ascended together, getting out at the third *étage* and walking down the corridor to my friend's room. We opened the double doors and found it empty. Thinking he might have gone out on to the balcony, she called his name. There was no answer. A friend of his occupied a room opposite and we concluded that he was paying him a visit.

It was the first time we had been in the room alone with each other.

Our eyes met. I touched her hand; she did not take it away. I took her into my arms; she did not resist. Except for the sound of our kisses we were absolutely silent—silent with that strange half-human silence that overtakes lovers when for the first time they abandon themselves.

Then suddenly, in the midst of those tremulous and passionate embraces, I experienced an uncanny sensation of there being another

presence in the room with us—I was sure of it! I was convinced we were not alone!

I turned my head.

The doors leading on to my balcony were ajar and through the narrow open space I could see the end of my friend's couch. Judge, then, of my horror, on catching sight of one of the well-known brown boots! He had been there all the time and had perhaps been a witness of our illicit love! What were we to do?

My companion rose and went toward the balcony. From the hard lines on her pretty face I understood that she meant to brazen it out. She pulled open the doors.

"Now!" she said, and there was mocking cruelty in her voice. "Now, that we and the coffee are ready I'll call in my old man."

But she need not have been facetious, she need have said nothing, for her old man was dead!

WOW

*by W. B. Seabrook**

ONE summer evening, a sentinel who stood leaning on his spear at the entrance to the Han Ku Pass—for this was many years before the building of the Great Wall—beheld a white-bearded traveler riding toward him, seated cross-legged upon the shoulders of a black ox.

Said the venerable stranger, when he drew near and halted:

"I am an old man, and wish to die peacefully in the mountains which lie to the westward. Permit me, therefore, to depart."

But the sentinel prostrated himself and said, in awe:

"Are you not that great philosopher?"

For he suspected the wayfarer to be none other than Lao-tze, who was reputed the holiest and wisest man in China.

"That may or may not be," replied the stranger, "but I am an old man, wishing to depart from China and die in peace."

At this, the sentinel perceived that he was indeed in the presence

* Mr. Seabrook later became famous as an adventurer and traveller, author of books on magic in Haiti and cannibalism in Africa.

of the great Lao-tze, who had sat for more than a hundred years in the shadow of a plum tree, uttering words of such extreme simplicity that no man in the whole world was learned enough to understand their meaning.

So the sentinel threw himself in the ox's path, and cried out:

"I am a poor and ignorant man, but I have heard it said that wisdom is a thing of priceless worth. Spare me, I beg you, ere you depart from China, one word of your great wisdom, which may, perchance, enrich my poverty or make it easier to bear."

Whereupon Lao-tze opened his mouth, and said gravely:

"Wow."

After which he ambled westward in the twilight and disappeared forever from the sight of men.

As for the poor sentinel, he sat dumbly scratching his head, saying over and over to himself in puzzled, uncertain tones, "Wow. Wow! Wow?"

For this absurd monosyllable had precisely the same meaning in ancient Chinese that it has in modern English, which is another way of telling you that it had no meaning at all, and that Lao-tze might just as appropriately have said, "Poo," or "Ba," or "Oh, hum."

But the sentinel, who imagined himself the possessor of some mighty incantation, went about his affairs as one demented, secretly repeating the strange word twenty thousand times a day, expecting with each breath that his wife would suddenly become young and beautiful, or that his hut would be transformed into a palace, or his spear into the ivory baton of a mandarin; until finally the exasperated captain of the guard took note of his strange mooning and muttering and had him beaten on the soles of his feet until he confessed the whole story of his encounter with Lao-tze.

And that was the end of the unhappy sentinel, for he died from the beating, but in due time the captain reported the saying of Lao-tze to the governor of the province, and eventually it reached the ears of the emperor.

II

Now the emperor cared more for the happiness of his subjects than for his own ease, and was accustomed to seek wisdom that he might apply it to better the condition of his people; so when he learned that the great Lao-tze's valedictory to humanity had been "Wow," he called his vizier and bade him consider the mystery.

The vizier engaged in a holy meditation on "Wow" for forty days and nights, after which he returned to the emperor and spoke.

"O Son of Heaven, doubtless it has often chanced that while engaged in the hunt, you have seen two vast companies of lions, arrayed in martial order, maiming and slaying each other in mighty battle."

"Never in my whole life," replied the astonished emperor.

"But surely, then, O Son of Heaven, you have noticed when coursing wolves, how certain of the pack are accustomed to act as slaves and burden bearers for the others."

"You know very well that I have never seen such a sight," answered the emperor, "but what I do see plainly is that my vizier has taken leave of his wits."

"I beg forgiveness, O Son of Heaven," persisted the vizier, "but I am at least convinced that you have observed how certain animals imprison others of their kind in chains and dungeons; how certain ones starve amid plenty; and how all the beasts of the forest, save a divinely favoured few, are compelled to engage in heavy, life-long toil."

"It is with the deepest pain," interjected the emperor in a tone of exquisite politeness, "that I shall now call in the executioner to cut off your honourable head, but I am comforted by the reflection that this will probably cause you only a slight inconvenience, as you seem already to have lost the use of it."

"My poor unworthy head will be too highly honoured, O Son of Heaven, but harken yet once again ere you decree my death. You have never seen such things as I have described, because the animals, whose communication is limited to 'Wow,' or 'Baa,' according to their kind, live naturally and simply as God intended; while man, who alone among God's creatures has invented speech to his confusion, is the only being afflicted with wars, prisons, slavery, poverty and sorrow.

"This is the hidden meaning concealed in the mystic utterance of the wise and holy Lao-tze:

"Abolish Language, and man will return to primal simplicity and happiness."

"A most excellent idea, and I forgive you," replied the emperor, "for while the abolition of Language may not accomplish all you say, it will at least put a stop to the incessant chatter and quarrelling of my wives."

So presently heralds were sent throughout all China, with an imperial decree that Language was to be abolished in the empire, beginning

with the first day after the Festival of the Full Moon, and that thereafter none might say aught but "Wow," on pain of death.

The people obeyed.

III

And so there dawned on China an era of simplicity and peace—a Golden Age, in which wars ceased, and industrial bondage and exploitation disappeared, for without spoken or written language they could no longer exist. Desires grew fewer. Each family tilled the soil just sufficiently to supply its own simple wants. Husband and wife, father and son, neighbour and neighbour, dwelt together in harmony and peace, for none said aught but "Wow," and hence all were agreed.

Laws were no longer necessary. Though there were armour and weapons, there was no occasion for donning them. People no longer roved about, for they were everywhere content. Though there were ships and carriages, there was no occasion to use them. Where two villages lay close together, separated only by a little hill, the voices of their cocks and dogs were mutually heard, yet people came to old age and died with no desire to go from one village to the other.

And the emperor, who had grown very old, lived as simple in his palace as his people in their villages, for his empire was no longer a burden on his shoulders, and was governed perfectly because it was not governed at all.

But in the meantime there had been born in a distant village a child with an impediment in his speech, who, as he grew to manhood, endeavored to say "Wow," but could only say "Wo." At first he was ashamed and envious, but later he persuaded himself that his incompetence was a virtue and that his blemish was a mark of superiority, and whenever he heard people saying "Wow," in the contented, old-fashioned way, he would puff out his chest and ostentatiously cry, "Wo," at the top of his voice, until finally he made himself such a nuisance that he was driven out of the village with sticks and stones.

When he arrived in the next village, where they knew nothing of the impediment in his speech, and stood in the market place saying, "Wo, wo, wo," the people arose and would have slain him, when suddenly one of their number, who like the rest had been content to say "Wow" all his life, suddenly took his stand beside the stranger and began to shout vehemently, "Wo! Wo! Wo!" And presently, strange to relate, half the village was imitating him.

Strangest of all, they immediately became discontented, and driven by an irresistible restlessness, abandoned their tranquil firesides and began to wander about the country, as in the old days, traveling in ones and twos and companies, arrogantly clamoring, "Wo, wo," spreading amazement, quarrel and dissension.

All this began in a far-off province, and did not come to the ears of the emperor, who continued to live peacefully year after year in his palace, until one day the door burst open and his ancient vizier appeared, bent with age and exhaustion, covered with dust and sweat.

The emperor was greatly astonished, and uttered an amazed "Wow," for the vizier had departed to his native village nearly a century before, and the emperor had never expected to see him or have need of seeing him again.

"O Son of Heaven," cried the old man in a trembling and unaccustomed voice, "the time for saying 'Wow' has reached an end, for a marvellous thing has come to pass. On the great plain which lies not far beyond the palace walls are two vast armies, armed with scythes and clubs and stones—and they of one army are furiously screaming 'Wow! Wow! Wow!' as if they had gone mad, while they of the other army, with equal fury, are replying 'Wo! Wo! Wo!' Each army is trying to outshout the other, and if they come together in battle the rivers will run red with blood, for their numbers are constantly increasing, and town is arrayed against town, village against village, family against family, brother against brother."

At these strange tidings, the emperor raised himself with difficulty from his couch, and with trembling hands lifted the lid of a massive chest from which he drew the sacred imperial robe of yellow and gold, embroidered with the emblem of the Great Dragon. His vizier's robe of state he also drew forth, and when the two old men had vested themselves in the panoply of power and wisdom, supporting each other, arm in arm, they tottered out of the palace.

When they came to the Yang Shi Bridge, outside the walls, they saw that the waters of the river were running red.

As they stood sorrowing, they heard a confused shouting, and beheld two remnants of the battling armies, the one in pursuit of the other. And it appeared that there would be fresh slaughter at the river's edge. But when the two onrushing bands espied the emperor and his vizier, they gave over flight and pursuit, stopped stockstill, and ceased their shouting.

The aged emperor stepped forward, raising his arms in a gesture that was at once paternal and majestic, and would have spoken. But straightway he was greeted with an angry chorus of "Wows" and "Wos" which were so mingled in the din that they sounded precisely alike to his astonished ears. And shouting thus together, for the moment, at least, in perfect harmony, they seized the emperor and his vizier, tied them together with a huge stone around their necks, and threw them headlong into the crimsoned river. After which, they remembered their former quarrel, and resumed their mutual slaughter.

And when the yellow moon rose, it shone, as of old, upon human strife and fields strewn with the dead, while naught remained of the emperor and the vizier and Lao-tze's holy wisdom save a few empty bubbles floating on a river of blood.

THE MERRY-GO-ROUND

by Julia M. Peterkin

A WHITE man came from nobody knew where with a merry-go-round and set it up in the vacant lot across from the village depot. Every evening when work on the plantations was over the gay music sounded clear in the still air, and the darkies flocked down to the village and rode out all the money they had. Then they stayed on a while to listen to the merry tunes.

Flaming gasoline torches lighted the tent, and fiery looking bay and black and gray horses rocked and challenged riders to come try them; and gilded chariots shone bright.

The man's name was Carson. He was white, for his skin was fair, but no such white man had ever been in these parts before. Except for his white skin he seemed black as any of the folks that rode on the merry-go-round.

Maum Mary Parker cooked his meals and took them to his tent. He offered to go to her house to eat, but she refused to allow this.

"No, I rudder fetch yo' victuals here to yo'," she said.

He offered to pay her well if she'd let him sleep in the soft looking, quilt-covered bed that he could see through the open window.

"No," she said, "No white man ain' nebber yet sleep in no bed o' mine, an' I know I ain't gwine sta't wid you."

He laughed and spat on the ground.

"All right, Aunty, but my money's good as anybody's. I'm sure it's as good as any these white folks round here's got, if they've got any."

"You eat yo' dinner; I'm waitin' on dem t'ings, an' keep yo' mou' off my white folks."

He laughed again.

"Some folks, eh?"

II

Jesse Weeks worked at the oil mill for good wages. He was strong as a mule and muscled like an ox. He was well fed, for Maum Mary fed him, and besides her good meals he often carried sweet potatoes to the mill and dipped them in the smoking hot oil that dripped from the press. Nothing in the world was better, except sometimes ash cake dipped in that same hot oil for gravy.

Jesse worked at the press ten hours a day, then went home to Maum Mary's, washed up, dressed, and was ready to take Meta, Maum Mary's daughter, to a dance or a party. Now they rode on the merry-go-round every night. One night they'd choose a chariot; another night white horses side by side. Meta sat modestly sidewise as she had seen white ladies sit on real horses. Another night they'd ride bay horses, or black.

They'd be married Thanksgiving with a big wedding. Maum Mary was already saving up eggs for the cakes. For 'twas something in these days to raise a girl and marry her off without anybody's ever having said anything against her.

The first time Carson smiled at Meta she was confused. She dropped a curtsy in return and said respectfully,

"Good evenin', sir."

He laughed, looking at her with bold, appraising eyes.

The next night when Jesse left Meta and went over to the parcher to buy a sack of peanuts, Carson walked over by her and said with a smile,

"You look like you're scared to speak to me. What's the matter with you? Is he got you under the hack?" indicating Jesse, who was returning.

"No, sir," answered Meta in an embarrassed way. She was not altogether certain of his words, for his r's rolled strangely.

Next morning Meta went to the village store, and Carson was lounging on the counter inside.

"Won't you have a dope?" he asked her.

The clerk glanced up at him quickly, but Meta appeared not to hear, and nothing more was said.

When the girl stepped out of the door, Carson got down off the counter and stood in the door and watched her cross the railroad track, then on the path up the hill.

Maum Mary was late getting the clothes in off the line that evening. The washing was a big one.

"Meta, you run on an' take da' white man's supper to him. I ain' likes to sen' yo', but jus' leab de dishes wid him till in de mornin', an' hurry on back."

Carson took the pan from the girl and untied the white cloth that covered it. Chicken, biscuits, hominy, gravy.

"Your ma is some cook, girl. I'll get fat staying here. But what makes you treat me so cold?"

Meta turned away and started home.

"Ma say she'll git de dishes in de mornin'."

"Hold on, what's your hurry? I've got a book of tickets here for you to ride out. Wait a minute, let me get 'em for you."

But Meta was gone.

III

Jesse cut a step or two to the jazzy music, then asked Meta gaily, a little later,

"What'll we ride tonight?"

"Le's ride one o' them gol' chariots. I declare tha's de sweetes' ridin' I ever ride," declared Meta in her gentle voice.

When the ride was over and a pair of horses had been tried to see which was really the better, Jesse went to the parcher for peanuts. Carson saw him go and came at once to where Meta stood waiting.

"What made you run off so? Whyn't you wait and get the tickets? You must think I want to eat you or something. Why, a girl like you!"

He didn't finish his sentence, for Jesse landed a terrific blow on his jaw, and followed it quickly with another.

A crowd gathered around them uncertain what to do. "You all lef' Jesse 'lone, he knows what he'd do. Dat ain' no white gentleman." One of the older men watched the fight with interest until Carson was soundly beaten, then he took Jesse's arm in a firm grip.

"You done gi' him enough, Jesse. Quit now."

Meta's voice was full of excitement as they walked home up the hill.

"I'm sho glad you done it, Jesse, but I was dat scared!"

But Maum Mary shook her head in disapproval.

"You better mine, boy. It don' do to trifle wid strange white men."

Next morning, before day, somebody knocked on the door of the shed-room where Jesse slept. He jumped up quickly, for the gasoline torches had made him dream of fire. Maybe the oil mill was afire!

He opened the door, saying excitedly,

"What you want?"

Carson's pistol gleamed in the starlight.

"Gawd!" said Jesse as it flashed and he fell, shot through, in the doorway.

The stillness was rent with the shrieks of Meta and Maum Mary. The news spread like wild-fire—Carson had shot Jesse. By dawn, hundreds of negroes filled the village street. Men and women were armed with hoes and rakes, axes and guns. Where was Carson? He was not in the tent where he slept.

The clerk in the village store had already dressed and gone downstairs, from the room where he slept, to the telephone. When he got Central, he said.

"Will you please telephone all the gentlemen around here and tell them that this merry-go-round fellow down here has shot Jesse Weeks? The niggers are pretty well stirred up, and they'd all better come help me get him off on the eight o'clock train."

By sunrise one of the plantation owners on horseback, with a gun on his shoulder, came riding down the hill into the village.

"What are all you niggers doin' here this time o' day?" he asked as he rode through the crowd.

"Good mornin', Cap'n," they answered politely and touched their hats.

"You'd better go on home, all of you. If Sheriff Hill has to come up here this mornin' there'll be trouble for somebody."

There were indistinct mutterings as he hitched his horse to a tree in front of the store and went upstairs to the clerk's room. Soon three more gentlemen rode up, hitched their horses and went upstairs, then two more. At last, nine horses were hitched outside.

Maum Hannah cooked for the clerk upstairs and lived in a cabin back of the store. She came out of her door with a great pot of steaming coffee that left a trail of fragrance behind it.

"One o' you niggers come open dis door fo' me," she commanded.

When it was done she went up the stairs talking to herself.

The eight o'clock train blew at the river bridge three miles away. There was a hush. Then steps sounded on the stairway, slow ready steps. Ten men came down—no, eleven. In the hollow square they formed at the door was a man with his hat pulled down over his eyes. Another man joined them, the village policeman. He was black, but he upheld the law whenever it was possible.

They walked slowly across the street to the depot, as with the dead, and reached it just as the train stopped. Two men stepped aboard; then Carson; then two more. The train started and the four men got off the rear end of it.

"Looks like you-all are having a picnic out here," said the conductor to the others who were standing outside.

"No, nothing like that," one of them answered.

The white men mounted their horses and rode up the hill toward home. The black people stood around talking in low tones. One of them came over to the policeman and talked a minute, and the policeman walked on down the street in another direction. Soon there was a shout and the tent over the merry-go-round was in flames. Horses and chariots stood still and burned to charred wood, they that had been so gay and swift!

IV

Carson left the train at the first large station it reached. He went to the station lunch counter, got a sandwich and a cup of coffee, then went across the street where he saw a sign "Board and Lodging." He took a room and went to bed.

When he awoke, the day was almost over. A new moon showed clear through the window. He stretched his limbs, yawned, then got up and washed his face in the China basin. He looked in the glass at his bruised cheek, smoothed his hair with his hands, put on his coat and went downstairs to the sidewalk.

With his hands in his pockets, he looked around. A cotton mill was over on the hill beyond the depot. Not far from it was a large tent. It was no merry-go-round tent. He'd go take a look at it.

He walked through its open door and a red-faced, stockily built man with a black moustache greeted him.

"Well, brother, how do you do?"

Carson's quick eyes took in the Bible on the table, the organ on one side, the hymn books.

"I'm down and out," he answered gloomily. "I thought I'd come talk to you."

"That's right, that's right. Cast your burden on the Lord, brother, it's the only way to salvation."

"But I'm out of a job," said Carson.

"Well, according to John 6:27, 'Labor not for the meat that perisheth.' What's your business, brother?"

Carson hesitated.

"I wish I could get work here with you. I'm mighty handy with a tent. You ought to see me take one down and put it up."

"You know anything about music?"

"I know it from A to Z," Carson answered confidently.

"I've been thinking about getting a regular fellow to go around and help me, but collections haven't been much lately."

"I tell you," said Carson. "You try me. I'll work for my board till you see if I give satisfaction. You won't be out anything much that way."

"How about them gas lights; can you light them?"

"Just watch me."

That night Carson rose from the congregation and gave a remarkable testimony of his salvation from sin. Next morning he practised faithfully on the organ until he could play a number of the hymns to be sung during the services.

"That's right, you got to put pep in 'em," approved the preacher.

Carson soon developed into a fine exhorter, and followed the sermons with a moving appeal to sinners to turn from sin. It was a steadier business than his former one; more exciting, too.

* * *

Jesse did not die. He's only crippled. He has crutches, and drags both feet together when he walks. He makes baskets and fish traps and chair bottoms out of split hickory.

Meta and Maum Mary take in washing still, and all together they make a living. Maum Mary is careful to take a part of their earnings to pay the preacher.

"Preachers is de servants ob Gawd, Meta, we 'bliged to take care of 'em or de worl'd 'ud git too full o' sin."

"One o' you niggers come open dis door fo' me," she commanded. When it was done she went up the stairs talking to herself.

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IV

Carson left the train at the first large station it reached. He went to the station lunch counter, got a sandwich and a cup of coffee, then went across the street where he saw a sign "Board and Lodging." He took a room and went to bed.

When he awoke, the day was almost over. A new moon showed clear through the window. He stretched his limbs, yawned, then got up and washed his face in the China basin. He looked in the glass at his bruised cheek, smoothed his hair with his hands, put on his coat and went downstairs to the sidewalk.

With his hands in his pockets, he looked around. A cotton mill was over on the hill beyond the depot. Not far from it was a large tent. It was no merry-go-round tent. He'd go take a look at it.

He walked through its open door and a red-faced, stockily built man with a black moustache greeted him.

"Well, brother, how do you do?"

Carson's quick eyes took in the Bible on the table, the organ on one side, the hymn books.

"I'm down and out," he answered gloomily. "I thought I'd come talk to you."

"That's right, that's right. Cast your burden on the Lord, brother, it's the only way to salvation."

"But I'm out of a job," said Carson.

"Well, according to John 6:27, 'Labor not for the meat that perisheth.' What's your business, brother?"

Carson hesitated.

"I wish I could get work here with you. I'm mighty handy with a tent. You ought to see me take one down and put it up."

"You know anything about music?"

"I know it from A to Z," Carson answered confidently.

"I've been thinking about getting a regular fellow to go around and help me, but collections haven't been much lately."

"I tell you," said Carson. "You try me. I'll work for my board till you see if I give satisfaction. You won't be out anything much that way."

"How about them gas lights; can you light them?"

"Just watch me."

That night Carson rose from the congregation and gave a remarkable testimony of his salvation from sin. Next morning he practised faithfully on the organ until he could play a number of the hymns to be sung during the services.

"That's right, you got to put pep in 'em," approved the preacher.

Carson soon developed into a fine exhorter, and followed the sermons with a moving appeal to sinners to turn from sin. It was a steadier business than his former one; more exciting, too.

* * *

Jesse did not die. He's only crippled. He has crutches, and drags both feet together when he walks. He makes baskets and fish traps and chair bottoms out of split hickory.

Meta and Maum Mary take in washing still, and all together they make a living. Maum Mary is careful to take a part of their earnings to pay the preacher.

"Preachers is de servants ob Gawd, Meta, we 'bliged to take care of 'em or de worl'd 'ud git too full o' sin."

ASHES TO ASHES

by Nunnally Johnson

AT first, occasionally, Ethel Faber had some misgivings as to the propriety of accepting so many and such expensive gifts from another man, but Ralph himself reassured her. Ralph was her husband. Take them, he said, all that were offered.

As pleased as this made her, she suffered, for the briefest of seconds, a twinge of pain that he should with such callousness ignore the opportunity of flattering her with threats of a wallop on the jaw if ever she accepted another token from August Ehler, but it passed so quickly she failed, then, to perceive the real significance of the incident. She gave herself over entirely to the luxury of these tributes which August stood at her elbow each evening. Soon, in the excess of her pleasure, she had forgotten the pain.

The first of August's gifts—she remembered it for a long, long time—had been a quart of gin, low-grade stuff, the same solution of water, juniper juice and alcohol that Ralph bought and drank steadily. August Ehler was at that time virtually at the outset of his career, working in a small way and among a limited clientele, a far cry indeed from his wealthy and fashionable circle of less than a year later. Boyishly enthusiastic in his ambitions, yet wholly and seriously wrapped up in the fascinating intricacies of his new business, he had engaged first the interest and then the friendship of the Fabers quite as much for the lovable complexity of his personality, at once deeply devout and broadly tolerant, as for the reliability of his gin and the moderateness of his prices. Behind his frank devotion to and reliance on the Gospel, they found a comfort and a feeling of safety which they had been able to discover in no other bootlegger.

They came to trust him with the blind confidence of little children. They would drink, without the faintest hesitation, anything he brought to them—anything. And he, on his part, appreciated their faith and was moved deeply by it. And God willing, he told them many times, they would never regret it.

It became a fond memory to them, the occasion of August's first shy offer of the gin to Ethel.

"Mrs. Faber," he had said, awkwardly ill at ease, looking very much like a tender young curate, "I just brought this extra quart along for you."

He blushed at his own boldness, and sought comfort in a fragment of text from the Book he loved so well: "'Because ye have been with me from the beginning.' Mr. Faber was my first customer, you know." Ethel had looked at the bottle, and then at Ralph, her eyes asking permission to accept, and Ralph had nodded very quickly. With a warm smile she had thanked August, and then deftly extracted the cork with her teeth.

They liked to recall how they had sat down then and there and drunk the quart, round after round, until it was all gone. It was not good gin, although three days old, but it was powerful. Gradually it loosened their tongues; they relaxed; they became friendlier. August, for the most part, limited his conversation to reiterated claims to perfect control over his thirst.

"I have the power to lay it down, and I have the power to take it again," he quoted from the Gospel according to St. John.

After the third drink the hostess dropped all affected restraint.

"Don't be formal," she said to August. "Call me Ethel. Can you pronounce it?"

"I can," he replied, "Ethel."

They congratulated him and took another drink.

"By the way," he added, rising politely, "my name is Ehler—August Ehler—Gus to my friends. Call me Gus."

Ralph extended his hand and the two men shook.

"I'm pleased to meet you, Mr. Ehler," Ralph said. "I'd been intending for some time to ask you your name."

"Gus," Ehler corrected him. "Don't call me Mister—call me Gus. Good ol' Gus Ehler—Honest Gus Ehler. I want you to call me Gus."

"Gus," said Ralph. Ethel said "Gussiel!" Ehler laughed heartily and slapped her on the back.

"No hard feelings," he said. "Good ol' Gus Ehler—everybody's friend."

The next drink was the last in the quart. Gaily Ethel upturned the bottle over her own head to show that it was empty.

"Sempty," she explained.

"Salright," Gus replied, and went and got one of Ralph's quarts. They drank the second bottle . . .

August's business was growing, even then at the start, by leaps and bounds, and soon the gifts to Ethel became mellower and more palatable. The gin gave way to authentic bonded stuff, rye, Bourbon and Scotch, warm and cheery, softening the nerves and senses, casting a golden glow over all the world. Ethel presently dropped the formality of asking permission of Ralph before accepting each of the never-ending sequence of bottles. His nod had grown quicker and quicker. After a time he discontinued his semi-monthly purchase of a case of gin and drank Ethel's presents.

Eventually, then, the rye and Bourbon were displaced by fancier drinks, rare boozes which had been only names to Ethel. August brought thick black liqueurs from Spain; dynamic concoctions that came in on ships from Russia; mellow brandies and soothing sauternes from France. He brought anisette, sugary and almost imperceptibly sharp; champagne that rang in Ethel's head like wild silver bells on a frosty night; and pot-bellied little bottles of *crème de menthe*. He gave her rum from Jamaica, which she swigged down like water; Irish whiskey, which upset her stomach; schnapps, which burned her mouth so fiercely that she had to wash it down with a large tumblerful of Scotch. He brought real beer.

Once there was dry Curacao for her. Another time August brought a Mexican favorite, mescal, which gave Ralph a slight touch of delirium tremens. On still another evening, for a lark, they drank gin, for the sake of *auld lang syne*. Never, though, was the Scotch replaced. Always, even when there were other bottles, Gus stood a sturdy brown bottle at Ethel's elbow, for better than anything else did she love Scotch.

Every evening they spent together, sitting around the large table in the Fabers' dining-room, drinking and singing and crying. Ethel sang little snatches of love ballads, some of them very sad. Ralph joined in on everything. Gus sang hymns.

It was not long before Gus bought a car, a long, low, 12-cylinder machine, with a purple body trimmed in narrow yellow stripes. Then they varied their evenings by driving out to drink their liquor in the fresh, sweet air of the open country. They were merry little outings, and generally, on the way home, they were in high spirits, as mettlesome and mischievous as school children on a holiday. Ralph and Gus threw empty bottles at farmhouse windows, and Ethel tied a cow's tail

to the rear axle once and drove a mile or so down the road before the boys noticed it. They came home refreshed and hungry and still thirsty.

Always on these outings, Gus noticed, Ethel clung to the bottle of Scotch which he gave her each evening as her own special property. It aroused in him a feeling of tender indulgence, a warm fondness, to note her childish gratitude for it and the fierce determination with which she clutched the bottle by the neck, as a babe, he told himself, clutched its own little bottle of milk. It was the mother instinct in her. He and Ralph drank whatever else they had brought along, sharing only an infrequent round of their exotic beverages with her. Only rarely did they take a single drink from her Scotch.

Two or three times, early in their friendship, Ralph urged Gus to make the party a foursome by bringing along a woman friend. He suggested the names of several, and Gus, plainly embarrassed, rejected them all.

"All these are the beginning of sorrows," he quoted from the Gospel according to St. Matthew. But his eyes rested on Ethel, and she, whenever she could see him, dropped hers. Once she seconded Ralph's suggestion. At the look she saw in Gus's eyes she faltered, her voice broke and, to cover her confusion, she turned the bottle of Scotch up to her lips. When finally she lowered it, she saw the look still there. She never suggested another woman again. She was beginning to understand.

II

Beginning to understand? No, she already understood. She realized she did. More interesting was to become aware that she returned this love. She was, for the moment, panic-stricken. It savored of treachery to Ralph. Then she set herself to justifying it. She tried long and hard to convince herself that this new love was right, that Ralph's treatment of her had been such as to alienate her affections, that Gus was a better man, a worthier man, Ralph's superior in every way. And soon, naturally, she was successful.

Greatly relieved at scaling this sentimental barrier, she enjoyed herself with reckoning the score against Ralph. His actions since they had developed Gus as a friend and provider were calculated, consciously or unconsciously, to force her into the bootlegger's arms. That first slight, when he had interposed no objections to her accepting presents

from him, other occasions when she had argued, as much with her own conscience as with Ralph, over this same question of propriety, and miscellaneous other incidents she was able to recall all brought Ralph into one aspect: he was exploiting her attractions to line his locker.

Briefly and bluntly she was pleased to find Ralph had been offering Gus her company in return for his liquor. It was as plain as the nose on her face.

She thought of Gus with the greatest tenderness, now that she had disposed of the obstacles to loving him. He was as old as she, perhaps older, and could doubtless drink her under the table five nights out of the seven, and yet she thought of him as a boy, a charming, unspoiled youth. Associating with men of the world every day, doing business with them constantly, it seemed to her that he had been able to retain an amazingly great part of his childish sweetness. She found in his propensity for quoting from the Scripture a residue of an early religious training that had softened and made holy his only poorly concealed love for her. It was, she saw, different, far different, from this practical emotion she had found in Ralph. It was rarer, purer.

Gus never permitted a word of this love to pass his lips, though words could have told nothing his eyes had not already said a thousand times. Perhaps his conscience, a strict conscience, forbade this treachery to a friend, who in addition had been a very good customer. He certainly had all the opportunities he could have wanted, but he never spoke. He only looked, and Ethel understood.

And it was she who touched off this smoldering passion. It was on one of their drives into the country in quest of fresh air. Indirectly Ralph was responsible. Gus had brought three of the little pot-bellied bottles of *crème-de-menthe*, two bottles of cognac, a quart of absinthe, and the inevitable Scotch, for the evening's entertainment, and when he went out of the house to put the laprobes in the car, Ethel saw Ralph make a surreptitious snatch across the table. The quart of absinthe disappeared. Then he stole out of the room.

Quietly she followed him. He was in the library. As she entered she was just in time to see the last of the absinthe drain through the neck of the bottle into his open mouth. When Gus arrived in answer to her whoops he found Ralph having a convulsion.

Determined that the evening should not be spoiled, they lifted him out of the house and into the car. Gus directed the chauffeur to drive

directly out of town. Neither the cold air nor the stimulants they gave him served to revive the stricken man. They made numerous lackadaisical efforts to open his eyes, and then, having failed altogether, they covered his recumbent form with a robe and sat back to enjoy the drive.

Ethel more than half expected some form or other of confession of love then and there. The opportunity was ideal; Ralph was as good as dead. She was positive Gus had not missed the answering light which had come into her eyes. She was certain that he knew his love was returned. But he remained silent. His soft, hurt eyes stared straight ahead. Methodically he lifted a bottle of cognac to his lips again and again, but he did not look around. His body was tense. His free hand gripped the edge of the seat. He seemed to be holding himself together only by a tremendous effort.

Slowly, almost unconsciously, she allowed her hand to slip toward his. There was an electric shock when she touched it that thrilled them both. Startled, she stopped; and then, encouraged by his failure to relieve his strained nerves by a shriek, she moved her hand again, and closed it over his. His knuckles, that were white with tension, flushed a rosy pink, which crept over his body until it appeared on his neck above his white collar. When, after slowly spreading over his entire surface, he felt that it had at last reached even his feet, he nearly swooned from the sweet excitement.

Then, before he could realize it, she was whispering to him, leaning against his shoulder, pressing her cheek against his. "Gus, Gus!" It was music, precious music to his ears. He closed his eyes, but he loosened his grip on the seat. Carefully, hampered though he was by her caress, he put the cork in the cognac bottle with his teeth, and laid it on the floor. Then he prepared himself to be ready when his self control should break down.

He became conscious that she was pulling at his hand, the while she kept whispering his name. He relaxed, permitted her to do what she would with his hand, and then, when he felt her raising it, he stiffened again. His eyes being already shut, he had no need to shut them ecstatically. He waited. She carried his hand to her lips, and they pressed warm and damp and sticky against each finger. Then she lowered it to her bosom. He caught the little gasp she gave. Then, suddenly, impulsively, she pressed it tight, tight, tight against the bottle of Scotch. With a partly stifled cry he caught her to him. His

reserve swept away, all caution abandoned, nothing there but the wild love of a man for a woman, he rained kisses, hot, fierce, passionate kisses, rained them furiously, savagely, on her cheeks, her eyes, her mouth, her chin, her neck, the bottle of Scotch. . . .

III

Before he left her that evening he whispered a promise to return the next morning. She stood before him, a far-away look in her eyes, a pitiful little trickle of whiskey dried on her chin. She did not understand. Gently he took the empty bottle from her unresisting hand and stood it on the chauffeur's head, and repeated the promise. She melted into his arms and, as Ralph was having another convulsion and paying no heed to anything else, they kissed good night.

She received him the next morning in the dining-room. A smile, half sadness, half pleasure, was on her face as he entered. The room, when she glanced about it, appeared a strange place, one she had not seen ever, or for a long time. But over it hung the fragrance of old, sweet pleasures. Her glance rested on a dent in the floor, where at the end of one of their evenings Ralph had started to gnaw his way to Australia. There was a bent bracket on the chandelier, where she had looped the loop on another occasion. And on the ceiling was a large green spot, where Gus had splashed several dollars' worth of spinach once, saying, "I will not any more eat thereof," attributing it to the Gospel according to St. Luke. But the memories brought sadness, for the night had been spent in thought and prayer, and the conclusion she had reached was not an easy one to carry out.

It was another Gus that appeared before her. The boyish solemnity was gone from his face. In its place was strength, a look of sternness born of determination; there was a glint of exaltation in his eye. She thought suddenly of his true resemblance to one of the apostles. Her head ached.

She met his embrace, clinging to him, her heart overflowing with emotion. Madly he caressed her, and whispered in her ear: "Dear heart, how are you?" She returned the whisper: "Fairly well. How are you?" "Great," he whispered in reply. They unclasped and sat down.

Quickly he cleared the ground for his subject. Where was Ralph? Had she taken her bromo seltzer? Did she remember all? Without waiting for replies he hurried on:

"Ethel, we've got to get out of here. This waiting, this suspense,

must end. You must go to Montreal; I'll go to New Orleans. You must get a divorce—at once. There will be no talk, no gossip, nothing against your character. I'll protect you in every way. But we—"

"Gus, Gus!" Her voice was low and throbbing with anguish. "If only it were possible!"

"But it is, dearest, it is. Another week, a month—"

"No, no, you don't understand. It isn't time, it isn't fear, that prevents it, dear Gus. It is something deeper, something bigger. It is my church."

"I—I don't understand, Ethel."

His faltering voice tore into her heart like a knife, but she steeled herself to do what she had decided was right.

"You forget, dear," she said gently, "that my church does not sanction divorce and remarriage. In the eyes of my church that is sin. And, Gus, would you have me if—"

His eyes blazed as he sprang to his feet.

"Your church!" he shot at her. "Would a good church stand between a woman and the man she loves?"

"August!" She stiffened, her eyes flashed, and instantly he was contrite.

"But Ethel—dearest—don't you see—"

She softened and touched a kiss to his temple.

"I see, dear Gussie, but what else is there to do? I will not, I cannot, go counter to my church. It would not be right."

He must have sensed the note of strength in her voice, for he got to his feet, his face red with conflicting emotions. He reached the buffet in a bound and poured himself a stiff drink. It seemed to calm him. He spoke more rationally.

"I cannot understand a church," he said, "that could be so terrible. I cannot understand one that insists on your staying married to a man who is not your equal in any way, a man whom you no longer love. It cannot be!"

"I should have told you last night," she murmured. "I am not free to love, no matter what sort of a man I have married. And I can never be free until he is dead—or I."

"Dead!"

"Yes, dead. Not until he is dead. There is no alternative. While he lives I am his. Only death can help me. And he is in such good health."

Gus stood as if transfixed.

"Dead!" he murmured. The word burned into his mind. "Ashes to ashes, dust to dust," he quoted. And then when he spoke to her again there was a new light, a light of hope in his eyes.

"Dearest," he said, "I have faith. 'The just shall live by faith.' Our love must not die."

"Only death," Ethel repeated softly, "only death can free me."

The bootlegger poured himself another drink. He started back to her side once, and then, on second thought, returned to the buffet and the bottle. His sombre eyes studied her through the dark amber of the liquor. She rose and joined him.

"Here's laughing at you," she toasted him, a forced gayety in her voice.

His eyes held dark and heavy.

"Death," he repeated, but he drank with her.

They stood looking at each other, a strained silence between them. They took another drink. Ethel put her arms around his neck.

"Gus," she said tenderly, "we must be careful. We must take care of ourselves against doing wrong. Perhaps—some day—who can tell—we may belong to each other. But not now, dear. We must cast the thought aside. I have done wrong, I have been a faithless wife, to say these things to you, but I couldn't help it, Gus. I wanted you to know."

He did not speak at once. His thoughts were far away, and bitter. He was thinking of himself. Wealthy, talented, possessed of professional and social position, master of more money than he would ever need for himself alone, he was powerless before this woman's sturdy adherence to her faith. It stirred him. "One of God's good women," he murmured. Other women could be had, dozens of them, moths ready to flutter to his flame, but—this was the woman he wanted. And finding her, he was helpless. A Methodist himself, he could not understand this objection to divorce.

"Ethel," he said, "you are a good woman, 'the noblest work of God.' Forgive me, dear, if I have offended you."

Her reply was to raise her lips to his. He set the glass down on the buffet and embraced her.

"Continue in prayer," he whispered to her, "and watch in the same with thanksgiving."

An hour later, when Ralph came downstairs, he found Ethel alone, sitting in the window-seat, staring out over the city. Gus had gone.

Without turning, she pointed toward the buffet. Without speaking, Ralph poured himself a drink. Without falling, he climbed on top of the buffet and went to sleep.

IV

Gus's thoughts, when he returned to his offices, were in a state of chaos. He spoke sharply to the office-boy in the vestibule. He snapped at the stenographers in the outer office. He was cross to the clerks in the accounting office. He glared at the people waiting for him in the anteroom. He was abrupt to his secretary.

"Get rid of them," he said curtly. "Tell them anything."

For an hour he sat struggling with his emotions. He thought of Ethel, and pity welled in his heart at the idea of her bound to a man she did not love. And yet against Ralph he felt no direct hatred. True, he realized, he was unworthy of her. He had mistreated her. He had robbed her—he had not failed to notice the discontinuance of the semi-monthly purchase of a case of gin or of the avidity with which Ralph seized the bottles he had brought to Ethel. He had ignored these things for her sake. But he had noticed them, and others too: Ralph's habitual failure to pour the first drink for his wife, his frugality when he did pour for her, the envy in his eyes at the sight of her bottle of Scotch.

"The face of the Lord is against them that do evil," he reflected. "And the end of all these things is at hand; be ye sober."

His reverie was at length interrupted by a hesitating knock at the door. The secretary brought word of the presence outside of Antonio Madoni, of the importing firm of Madoni & Feronella.

"Show him in," Gus ordered, shaking his thoughts from him.

Madoni entered, a little Italian with a perpetual smile and a roving, wary eye.

Gus greeted him without enthusiasm. "More excuses, I suppose," he said. "This is the last time. Go on and tell me, the shipment is still delayed. You want me to give you more time. Right?"

Madoni smiled on.

"Ah, Mist' Ehla," he said, "she's a beet late. Whatta you care? You gotta plent' booze. She be in soon-a now. You wanta some gin?"

Gus regarded the Italian coldly.

"I don't sell gin any more, and you know it."

Unabashed the Italian smilingly enumerated the qualities of this new lot.

"Only a leetla beet. You tak-a dees gin. She's al-a-right dees gin she is. She got-a da Gordon labels on."

"Where'd you get it?" Gus asked.

From a friend, a druggist, likewise an Italian. No, he didn't know when it was made. But it had Gordon labels on. Madoni had the highest faith in the manufacturer.

"I gotta da case downstairs," he wheedled. "Mebbe I let you have it for not'in'. Try it. Fine-a stuff I got."

Gus thought it over. "Bring it up," he told him finally, and presently one of Madoni's subordinates lifted it into the office and laid it on the desk. Gus drew the cord from a bottle with his teeth. He poured two glasses.

"Let's see how it goes," he said.

Madoni smilingly pushed the proffered glass back.

"Nev-a touch-a da stuff," he said. "None-a da booze for mine."

Gus smelled his glass. Then he studied the Italian intently. He smelled the drink again, and then the bottle. Finally he poured the two drinks back into the bottle and corked it. He pressed a button and the secretary came in.

"Call a taxi," he said.

Madoni and his subordinates moved to the door. Gus put on his coat and followed them. They shook hands, and the Italians left. When the taxi came Gus sent the secretary down with the case of gin. He followed it shortly. A minute later he and the case of gin were speeding toward Rose Crest Heights.

Ethel did not attempt to conceal her surprise at his early return, and at the sight of the case being brought in she clapped her hands with pleasure; she thought it was Scotch. Gus patted her shoulder. "It's gin," he said tenderly. She pouted charmingly, until he produced a pint flask from each hip pocket. "Scotch," he said. With a little cry of pleasure she pressed them to her heart.

He led her into the dining-room. Ralph still lay asleep on the buffet. Gus glanced at him once, but said nothing. Ethel brought out two glasses and they drained the two pints before speaking.

"Not my will, O Lord, but Thine be done," he murmured.

"Gus—" she began.

"Hush," he commanded, and suddenly she realized there was something ominous about his air, something threatening, menacing. She did not understand it, and it frightened her strangely. He drew her to

the divan and they sat down together. She tried to speak again, and again he warned her. She tried to catch his hand; it was clenched and hard. She looked up into his face fearfully and saw that his eyes were fixed on Ralph's still form. He was staring steadily, relentlessly. Involuntarily her eyes followed his.

Then, through the long afternoon, they watched together, neither moving nor speaking. Their eyes did not leave the inert figure. The ray of sun through the west window lengthened and flattened. At long, dreary intervals a clock struck somewhere—three, four, five o'clock. The room grew dark, and night came. Still they did not move, nor did Ralph.

At five-thirty Ethel, her nerves stretched to the breaking-point, shaking and throbbing and weak in every member, rose and with a little half-hysterical cry rushed across the room to the buffet. Gus rose to restrain her, but she motioned him back. She picked up the heavy, silver-inlaid corkscrew and gouged Ralph's knuckles with its point. His hand relaxed and she snatched the half empty bottle of Scotch from it. With a little moan of pleasure she raised it to her lips, and did not lower it until it was empty. Then, refreshed, she returned to Gus's side.

They took up the vigil again, now in the semi-dark, but it was not long they had to wait. The gouge in the knuckle had aroused Ralph. He stirred once or twice convulsively, shifting his position.

At length, after several unsuccessful efforts, he lifted his head. With bleared, nearly closed eyes he glanced about the room, seeing nothing. Gus and Ethel, still as death, watched him from a darkened angle of the room. Ralph studied the situation for some time, though betraying no particular interest in it. Then he raised himself to his elbow, to his knees, swaying perilously, and finally he gained his feet. He stood straight up on top of the buffet, mumbling to himself. The watchers saw him grope in the air for a moment, and then try to step down the four feet to the floor. He fell, striking head first, and scrambled to his feet, giggling.

"I'm down," they heard him say.

He made his way to the center table, propped himself against it, and from there studied the room again. His roving eyes came to rest on the case of gin. Electrified he reached for it and ripped off the top. Gus drew Ethel closer to him. Their hands clasped. They waited tensely for they knew not what. They could hear Ralph chortling as he dis-

covered the contents of the case. And he mumbled incoherently as he extracted the cork from a bottle.

Then the mumblings were hushed. In their place came gurgles, long and deep. Finally a hollow one, as he pulled his mouth away. They saw him, silhouetted against the window, set the bottle again on the table. Then he collapsed into a chair. For a moment he seemed comfortable; then his legs began to stiffen. The chair screeched as his writhing body strained in it. His head fell back. His whole body stiffened. There was a blood-chilling rattle in his throat. Then he lay still.

A minute of silence passed. The room was like death. Ethel was half unconscious from the tension, the horror of the unknown. She could only clutch Gus's hand. Then he shook himself loose from her. He rose unsteadily and went over to the chair. He produced a small mirror from his pocket and held it before Ralph's open mouth. He took it to the window and looked at it, after which he went out into the hall.

She heard him take the receiver from the phone. He called a number.

"Is this Madoni? . . . This is Ehler speaking. I've called to let you know I don't think I'll take that consignment after all. . . . Yes, I mean the gin. . . . No, it's not the price; I've just got a hunch it's not all right. . . . Yes, I'll pay for this case. I'll send a check in the morning. Good-by."

"Ethel," he said, coming back into the room and pulling her into his arms, "the Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away." He kissed her gently on the top of the head. "And His ways are inscrutable. We, poor sinners, can only accept His mandates as we in our poor way can interpret them. If He saw fit . . . ashes to ashes, dust to dust. It is His will, and of sinners did He say 'And these shall go into everlasting punishment'"—he pressed her closer—"but the righteous into life everlasting." Are you happy now, dearest?"

She snuggled in his arms with a little purr of contentment.

PARIS AFTER 8:15

by George Jean Nathan

FOR the American professional seeker after the night romance of Paris, the French have a phrase which, be it soever inelegant, retains still a brilliant verity. The phrase is "*une belle poire*." And its Yankee equivalent is "sucker."

The French, as the world knows, are a kindly, forgiving people: and though they cast the epithet, they do so in manner tolerant and with light arpeggio—of Yankee sneer and bitterness containing not a trace. They cast it as one casts a coin into the hand of some maundering beggar, with commingled oh-wells and philosophical pity. For in the Frenchman of the Paris of today, though there run not the blood of Lafayette, and though he detest Americans as he detests the Germans, he yet, detesting, sorrows for them, sees them as mere misled yokels, unc cosmopolite, obstreperous, of comical posturing in ostensible un-Latin lech, vainglorious and spying—children into whose hands has fallen Zola, children adream, somnambulistic, groping rashly for those things out of life that, groped for, are lost—that may come only as life comes, naturally, calmly, inevitably.

But the Frenchman, he never laughs at us; that would his culture forbid. And, if he smile, his mouth goes placid before the siege. His attitude is the attitude of one beholding a Comstock come to the hill of Hörselberg in Thuringia, there to sniff and snicker in Venus's crimson court. His attitude is the attitude of one beholding a Tristan *en voyage* for a garden of love and roses which he can never reach. His attitude, the attitude of an old and understanding professor, shaking his head musingly as his tender pupils, un mellowed yet in the autumnal fragrances of life, giggle covertly over the pages of Balzac and Flaubert, over the nudes of Manet, over even the innocent yearnings of the bachelor Chopin.

The American, loosed in the streets of Paris by night, however sees in himself an other and a worldlier image. Into the crevices of his flat house in his now far-away New York have penetrated from time to time vague whisperings of the laxative deviltries, the bold saucinesses of the city by the Seine. And hither has he come, as comes a jack tar to West Street after protracted cruise upon the celibate seas, to smell out, as a very devil of a fellow, quotation-marked life and its attributes.

What is romance to such a soul—even were romance, the romance of this Paris, uncurtained to him? Which, forsooth, the romance seldom is: for, though it may go athwart his path, he sees it not, he feels it not, he knows it not, can know it not, for what it is.

Romance to him means only an elaborate and circumspect winking at some perfectly obvious and duly checked little baggage; it means to him only a scarlet-cushioned seat along the mirrored wall of the *Café Américain*, a thousand incandescents, a string quartette sighing through "Un Peu d'Amour," a quart of "wine." Romance to him is a dinner jacket prowling by night into the comic opera (*American libretto*) purlieus of modern Montmartre, with its spurious extravaganzas of rouge and roister, with its spider webs of joy. For him, there is romance in the pleasure girls who sit at the tables touching St. Michel before the *Café d'Harcourt*, making patient pretense of sipping their Byrrh until a passing "*Eh, bibi*," assails their tympani with its suggested tintinnabulation of needed francs: for him—"models." And the Bullier, ghost now of that old Bullier where once little Luzanne, the inspiration of a hundred palettes, tripped the polka, the new Bullier with its colored electricity and ragtime band and professional treaders of the Avenue d l'Observatoire, is eke romance to his nostril. And so, too, he finds it atop the Rue Lepic in the now sham Mill of Galette, a capon of its former self, where Germaine and Florie and Mireille, veteran battle-axes of the Rue Victor Massé, pose as modest little workgirls of the Batignolles. And so, too, in that loud, crass annex of Broadway, the *Café de Paris*—and in the Moulin Rouge, which died forever from the earth a dozen years ago when the architect Niermans seduced the place with the "art nouveau"—and amid the squalid hussies of the fake Tabarin—and in the Rue Royale, at Maxim's with its Tzigane orchestra composed of German gipsies and its toy balloons made by the Elite Novelty Co. of Jersey City, U. S. A.

The American notion of Paris under the guardianship of the French stars, of Paris caressed by the night wind come down from Longchamps and filtered through the chestnut branches of Boulogne, is usually achieved from the Sons of Moses who, in spats and sticks, adorn the entrance of the Olympia and the sidewalks of the *Café de la Paix* and interrogatively guide-sir the passing foreign mob. This Paris consists chiefly of a view of the exotic bathtub of the good King Edward of Britain, quondam Prince of Wales, in the celebrated house of the crystal staircase in the Rue Chabanaïs, of one of the two "mysterious"

midinette speak-easys in the dark Rue de Berlin (where the "midinettes" range from the tender age of forty-five to fifty) of the cellar of the tavern near the Panthéon with its tawdry wenches and beer and butt-soaked floors—of tawdry resorts and tawdrier peoples.

Do I treat of but a single class of Americans? Well, maybe so. But the other class—and the class after that—think you *these* are so different? So different, goes my meaning, in the matter of appropriating to themselves something of the deep and very true romance that sings still in the shadowed corners of this one-time Flavia of capitals, that sounds still, as sounds some far-off steam-boat whistle wail in the death-quiet of night, pleading and pathetic, that calls still to the dreamers of all the world from out the tomb of faded triumphs and forgotten memories?

True, alas, it is, that gone is the Paris of Paris's glory—gone that Paris that called to Louise with the luring melody of a zithered soul. True, alas, it is, that the Paris of the Guerbois, with its crowd of other days—Degas and Cladel and Astruc and the rest of them—is no more. Gone, as well, and gone forever is the cabaret of Bruant, him of the line of François Villon—now become a place for the vulgar oglings of Cook's toursits taxicabbing along the Boulevard Rochechouart. Gone the wild loves, the bravuras, the *camaraderie* of warm night skies in the old Boulevard de Clichy, supplanted now with a strident concatenation of Coney Island sideshows: the "Cabaret de l'Enfer," with its ballyhoo made up as Satan, the "Cabaret du Ciel," with its "grotto" smelling of Sherwin-Williams light blue paint, the "Cabaret du Néant," with its Atlantic City plate glass trick of metamorphosing the visiting doodle into a skeleton, the "Lune Rousse," with its mean Marie Lloyd species of lyrical concupiscence, the "Quat'-z-Arts," with its charge of two francs the glass of beer and its concourse of loafers dressed up like Harry B. Smith, "poets," in black velvet, corduroy *grim pants* and wiggy hirsutal cascades, to impress "atmosphere" on the minds of the attendant citizenry of Louisville. And gone, too, with the song of Clichy is the song from the heart of St. Michel, the song from the heart of St. Germain. "Tea rooms," operated by American old maids, have poked their noses into these once genuine boulevards . . . and, as if giving a further fillip to the scenery, clothing shops with windows haughtily revealing the nobby art of Kuppenheimer, postcard shops laden to the sill's edge with lithographs disclosing erstwhile *Saturday Evening Post* cover heroines, and case upon case dis-

playing in lordly enthusiasm the choicest cranial confections of the house of Stetson. . . .

What once on a time was, is no more. But Romance, notwithstanding, has not yet altogether deserted the Paris that was her loyal sweetheart in the days when the tricolor was a prouder flag, its subjects a prouder people. There is something of the old spirit of it, the old verve of it, lingering still, if not in Montmartre, if not in the edisoned highways of the Left Bank, if not in the hitherward boulevards, then still somewhere. But where, ask you, is this somewhere? And I shall tell you. This somewhere is in the eyes of the Parisian girl; this somewhere is in the heart of the Parisian man. There, romance has not died—one must believe, will never die.

And, having told you, I seem to hear you laugh. "We thought," I would seem to hear you say, "that he was going to tell us of concrete places, of concrete byways, where this so gorgeous romance yet tarries." And you are aggrieved and disappointed. But I bid you patience. I am still too young to be sentimental: so have you no fear. And yet, bereft of all of sentimentality, I issue you my challenge: this somewhere is in the eyes of the Parisian girl, this somewhere is in the heart of the Parisian man.

By Parisian girl I mean not the order of Austrian wenches who twist their tummies in elaborate tango epilepsies in the Place Pigalle, nor the order of female curious who expectorate with all the gusto of American drummers in La Hanne-ton, nor yet the Forty-niners who foregather in the private entrance of 16 Rue Frochot. I do not mean the deadeyed joy jades of the café concerts in the Champs Elysées. I do not mean the crow-souled scows who steam by night in the channels off the Place de la Madeleine. The girl I mean is that girl you notice leaning against the onyx balustrade at the Opéra—that one with lips of Burgundy and cheeks the color of roses in olive oil. The girl I mean is that phantom girl you see, from your table before the Rotonde across the way, slipping past the iron grilling of the Luxembourg Gardens—that girl with faded blouse but with eyes, you feel, a-color with the lightning of the world's jewels. The girl I mean is that girl you catch sight of—but what matters it where? Or what she leans against or what she wears or what her lips and eyes? If you know Paris, you know her. Whether in the Allée des Acacias or in the Boulevard Montparnasse, she is the same: the real French girl of still abiding Parisian romance; the real French girl in whose baby daughter, some

day, will be perpetuated the laughter of the soul of a city that will not fade. And in whose baby girl in turn, some day long after that, it will be born anew.

Ah, me, the cynic in you! Do you protest that the girl of the balustrade, the girl of the Luxembourg, are very probably American girls here for a visit? Well, well! *Tu ne pays ma tête*. Who has heard of romance in an American girl? I grant you, and I make grant quickly, that the American girl is, in the mass, more ocularly massaging, more nimble with the niblick, more more in several ways than her sister of France; but in her eyes, however otherwise lovely, is glint of steel where should be dreaming pansies, in her heart reverie of banknotes where should be *billets doux*.

And so by Parisian man I mean, not the chorus men of Des Italiens, betalcumed and odoriferous with the scents of Pinaud, those weird birds who are regarded by the casual Yankee as typical and symbolic of the nation. Nor do I mean the fish-named, liver-faced denizens of the region down from the Opéra those spaniel-eyed creatures who live in the tracks of petite Sapphos, who spend the days in cigarette smoke, the nights in scheming ambushade. Nor yet the Austrian cross-breeds who are to be held behind the *gulasch* in the Rue d'Hauteville, nor the semi-Milanese who sibilate the *minestrone* at Aldegani's in the Passage des Panoramas, nor the Frenchified Spaniards and Portuguese who gobble the *guisillo madrileño* at Don José's in the Rue Helder, nor the half-French Cossacks amid the *potrokha* in the Restaurant Cubat, nor the Orientals with the waxed mustachios and girlish waists who may be observed at moontide dawdling over their *café à la Turque* at Madame Louna Sonnak's. These are the Frenchmen of Paris no more than the habitués of Back Bay are the Americans of Boston, no more than the Americans of Boston are—Americans.

It is night in Paris! It is night in the Paris of a thousand memories. And the Place de la Concorde lies silver blue under springtime skies. And up the Champs Elysées the elfin lamps shimmer in the moist leaves like a million topaz tears. And the boulevards are a-thrill with the melody of living. Are you, now far away and deep in the American winter, with me once again in memory over the seas in this warm and wonderful and fugitive world? And do you hear with me again the twang of guitars come out the hedges of the Avenue Marigny? And

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do you smell with me again the rare perfume of the wet asphalt and do you feel with me again the wanderlust in the spirit soul of the Seine? Through the frost on the windows can you look out across the world and see with me once again the trysting tables in the Boulevard Raspail, a-whisper with soft and wondrous monosyllables, and can you hear little Ninon laughing and Fleurette sighing, and little Hélène (just passed nineteen) weeping because life is so short and death so long? Are you young again and do memories sing in your brain? And does the snow melt from the landscape of your life and in its place bloom again, the wild poppies of the Saint Cloud roadways, telegraphing their drowsy content through the evening air to Paris?

Or is the only rosemary of Paris that you have carried back with you the memory of a two-step danced with some painted bawd at the Abbaye, the memory of the night when you drank six quarts of champagne without once stopping, to prove to the onlookers in the Rat Mort that an American can drink more than a damned Frenchman, the memory of that fine cut of roast beef you succeeded in obtaining at the Ritz?

Did I mention food? Ah-h-h, the night romance of Parisian nutriment! Parisian, said I. Not the low hybrid dishes of the bevy of British-American hotels that surround the Place Vendôme and march up the Rue de Castiglione or of such nondescripts as the Tavernes Royale and Anglaise—but *Parisian*. For instance, my good man, *caneton à la bigarade*, or duckling garnished with the oozy, saliva-provoking sauce of the peel of bitter oranges. There is a dish for you, a philter wherewith to woo the appetite! For example, my good fellow, sole Mornay (no, no, not the "sole Mornay" you know!), the sole Mornay whose each and every drop of shrimp sauce carries with it to palate and nostril the faint suspicion of champagne. Oysters, too. Not the Portuguese—those arrogant shysters of a proud line—but the Arcachons Marennes and Cancales *supérieures*: baked in the shell with mushrooms and cheese, and washed down exquisitely with the juice of grapes goldened by the French suns. And salmon, cold, with sauce Criliche; and artichokes made sentimental with that Beethoven-like fluid orchestrated out of caviar, grated sweet almonds and small onions; and ham boiled in claret and touched up with spinach *au gratin*. The romance of it—and the wonder!

But other things, alackaday, must concern us. *Au 'voir*, my beloveds *au 'voir*! *Au 'voir* to thee, *La Matelote*, thou fair and toothsome fish stew, and to thee, *Perdreau Farci à la Stueit*, thou aristocratic twelve-franc seducer of the esophagus! *Au 'voir*, my adored ones, *au 'voir*.

Voilà! And now again are we afield under the French moon. What if no more are the grisettes of Paul de Kock and Murger to fascinate the eye with wistful diableries? What if no more the old Vachette of the Boul' Mich' and the Rue des Ecoles, last of the *cafés littéraires*, once the guzzling ground of Voltaire and Rousseau and many such another profound imbiber? What if no more the simple Montmartroise of other times, and in her stead the elaborate wench of Le Coq d'Or, redolent of new satin and parfum Dolce Mia? Other times, other manners—and other girls! And if, forsooth, Ninette and Manon, Gabrielle and Fifi, arch little mousmés of another and mayhap lovelier day, have long since gone to put deeper soul into the cold harps of the other angels of heaven, there still are with us other Ninettes, other Manons and other Gabrielles and Fifis. "*La vie de Bobème*" is but a cobwebbed memory: yet its hosts, though scattered and scarred, in spirit go marching on. The Marseillaise of romance is not stilled. In the little Yvette whose heart is weeping because the glass case in the Café du Dôme this day reveals no letter from her so grand André, gone to Cassis and there to transfer the sapphire of the sea and mesmerism of roses to canvas, is the heart of the little Yvette of the Second Empire. In the lips of Diane that smile and in the eyes of Hélène that dream and in the toes of Thérèse that dance is the smile, is the dream, is the dance in echo of the Paris of a day bygone.

Look you with me into the Rue de la Gaité, into the Gaité-Montparnasse, still comparatively liberated from the intrusion of foreign devils, and say to me if there is not something of old Paris here. Not the Superba, Fantasma Paris of Anglo-Saxon fictioneers, not the Broadway, Strandified, dandified Paris of the Folies-Bergère and the Alcazar, but the Paris still primitive in innocent and unbribed pleasure. And into the Bobino, its sister music hall of the common people, where the favorite Stradel and the beloved Berthe Delny, "*petite poupée jolie*," as she so modestly terms herself, bring the grocer and his wife and children and the baker and his wife and children temporarily out of their glasses of Bock to yell their immense approval and clap their hands. I have heard many an audience applaud. I have heard applause for Tree at His Majesty's in London, for Schroth at the Kleines in

Berlin, for Féraudy at the Comédie Française, for Skinner at the Knickerbocker—and it was stentorian applause and sincere—but I have never heard applause like the applause of the audience of these drabber halls. The thunders of the storm king are as a sonata against the staggering artillery of approbation when Pharnel of the Montparnasse sings "*C'est pas difficile*"; the howlings of the north wind are as zephyrs against the din of eulogy when Marius Reybas of the Bobino lifts a mighty larynx in "*Mahi Mahi*." Great talent? Well, maybe not. But show me a group of vaudevillians and acrobats who, like this group at the Gaité, can amuse one night with risqué ballad and somersault and the next with Molière—and not be shot dead on the spot!

Leave behind you Fysher's, where the smirking monsieur fills the red upholstery with big-spending American hinds by warbling into their liquored bodies cocoa butter ballades of love and passion, and come over to the untufted Maillol's. And hear Maillol sing for the price of a beer. Maillol's lyrics are not for the American virgin: but, at that, they sing laughter in place of Fysher lech. Leave behind you Paillard's, vainglorious in its bastard salades Danicheff, its soufflés Javanaise; leave the blatant Boulevard des Italiens for the timid *bistrop* of Monsieur Delmas in the scrawny Rue Huygens, with its *soupe aux légumes* at twenty centimes the bowl, its *cotelette de veau* at fifty the plate. A queer oasis, this, with old Delmas's dog suffering from the St. Vitus and quivering against the tables as you eat; with its marked napkins in a rack, like the shaving cups in a rural barber shop, one napkin a week to each regular patron. Avaunt, ye gauds of Americanized Paris. Here are poor and starving artists come to dine aristocratically on seventy-five centimes—fifteen cents. Here are no gapings of Cook's; here no Broadway prowlers. A dank hole, yes, but in its cracked plaster the sense of Romany sunsets of yonder times. Leave behind the dazzling dance places of theatrical Montmartre, American, and come back of the wine shop in the Rue de la Montagne-Sainte-Geneviève! Leave behind the turning mill wheel, American, and come into the Avenue de Choisy, where over a preglacial store a couple of cornets baffle the night and set a hundred feet in motion, feet from the Gobelins quarter, feet from the Butte-aux-Cailles! More leathery feet, to be sure, than the suède feet of the Ziegfeld Montmartre, but kicking up a different wax dust, the wax dust of a different Paris.

But you are Anglo-Saxon, and to you romance, mayhap, means only Tobani and Edison, Maurice and Paul Poiret. And to you I am vulgar,

crude; and I know not romance. Well, so be it. But, to me, Edison has driven romance out into the night. And Poirret has slammed the door in its pleading face.

It is springtime in Paris! It is night in the Paris of a thousand memories. Can you, now remote in the American winter, hear again through the bang of the steaming radiator and the crunch on the winter's snows the song that Sauterne sang into your heart on the terrace named after the lilacs—on that wonderful, star-born evening when all the world seemed like a baby's first laugh: all full of dreams and hopes and thrilling futures? And can you rub the white cold off the panes and look out across the Atlantic to a warmer land and see again the Gardens of the Tuileries sleeping in the moon glow and Sacré Coeur sentinelled against the springtime sky and the tables of the cafés along the Grand Boulevards agog and a-glitter and the green-yellow lights of the Ambassadeurs tucked away in the trees and the *al fresco* amours at Fouquet's and the gay crowds on the Avenue de l'Opéra and the spacious bibbing in the Rue Halévy and the mystery of the Quai de la Tournelle and the massive splendor of Notre Dame blessing the night with its towered hands and girls shooting ebony arrows from the bows of ebony eyes? And no smell of Childs cooking filters into the open to offend the nostril, for the sachet of the Bois de Boulogne breeze is again on the world. Ah, Bois de Boulogne, silent now under the slumbering heavens, where your equal? From the Prater to the Prado, from the Casine to Central Park, one may not find the like of you, fairy wood of France!

Romance hunter, come with me. Stomach-turned at the fat niggers dressed up like Turks and Algerians and made to lend "an air" to the haunt of the nocturnal belly dancers in the Rue Pigalle, sickened at the stupid lewdities of the Rue Biot, disgusted at the brassy harlotries of the Lapin Agil, come with me into that *auberge* of the Avenue Trudaine where are banned catch-coin stratagems, fleshly pyrotechnics, that little refuge whose wall gives forth the tableau of Salis, he of the Niagaran whiskers and the old Chat Noir, strangling the adolescent versifiers of Montmartre, the tableau of the crimson rose of Poetry blossoming from out their strangling pools of blood. Come with me and sing a chorus with the crowd in the "conservatoire" of the Boulevard Rochechouart and beat time, like the rest of it, with knife on

plate, with glass on table. Come away from the Brasserie des Sirènes of Mademoiselle Marthe in the Faubourg Poissonnière, from the Rue Dancourt; from the Moulin Rose in the Mazagran—from all such undiluted cellars of vicious prostitution—if these be Paris, then West Twenty-eighth Street is New York.

Look you, romance seeker, rather into the places of Montépin and Eugène Sue. The moon is down. The sound of dance is stilled in the city. So go we into the Rue Croissant, with its shaveless thuggeries and marauding cabs. It is dark, very. And very quiet. And the sniff of unknown things is to be had in the air. Dens of drink with their furtive thieves . . . the enigma of the shadows of the church of Saint Eustache . . . slinking feet to the rear of you . . . at length, the Rue Pirouette and the sign of the angel Gabriel on the lantern before the house. Here is good company to be found! Well do I remember the *bon-camaraderie* of Henri Lavérte, that most successful of Parisian burglars, of the good Jean Darteau, that most artistic of all Parisian second story virtuosi, of pretty Mado Veralment, who was not convicted for the murder of her erstwhile lover Abernal, nor, at a later date, for that of her erstwhile lover Crepeat, both of whom, so it had been rudely whispered by her enemies, had rashly believed to desert her for another charmer. Witty and altogether excellent folk. Indeed, I might go further from the truth than to say that in no woman have ever I found a deeper, a more authentic appreciation of the poetry of Verlaine than in this Mademoiselle Mado.

So, too, up the stone steps and into the Caveau of the Rue des Innocents . . . and here—likewise a jolly party. Inquire of most persons about Le Caveau and you will be apprised that it is a "vile hole," "a place of the lowest order." It *is* dirty, so much will I grant; and it *is* a Brobdingnagian smell. Also, is it frequented almost entirely by murderers, garroters and thieves. But to say it is "a vile hole" or "a place of the lowest order" is to say what is not true. It is immeasurably superior to the tinselled inn of the Rue Royale. And its habitués constitute an infinitely more respectable lodge. If the left wall of the cavern contains its "roll of honor"—the names of all the erstwhile noted gentlemen patrons of the establishment who have, because of some slight carelessness or oversight, ended their days in the company of the public executioner—I still cannot appreciate that the list is any the less civilized than the head waiter's "roll of honor" at the celebrated tavern in the Avenue de l'Opéra. Nor do the numerous scribbled in-

scriptions on the other walls, such saucy epigrams as "To hell with the prefect of police," "The police are damned low fleaful dogs" and the like impress me less favorably than the scribbled inscriptions on notes of assignation placed covertly by subsidized waiters into the serviettes of the Callot-adorned Thaïses in the spectacularized haunts of the Bois. The piano in Le Caveau may be diabetic, senescent, and its operator half blind and all knuckles (as he is), but the music it gives forth is full of the romance of Sheppard and Turpin, of stage coach days and dark and nervous highways, of life when life was in the world and all the world was young.

Paris when your skies are graying, how many of us know you? Do we know your Rue du Pont Neuf, with its silent melodrama under the dawning heavens, or do we know only the farce of your Montmartre? Do we know the drama of your Comptoir, of your Rue Montorgueil, when your skies are faintly lighting, or do we know only the burlesque of your Maxim's and your Catélans? Do we, when the week's work of your humbler people is done, see the laughter in dancing eyes in the Rue Mouffetard or, in the revel of your Saturday night, do we see only the belladonna'd leer of the drabs in the Place Pigalle? Do we hear the romance of your concertinas setting thousands of hobnailed boots a-clatter with Terpsichore in the Boulevard de la Chapelle, in Polonceau and Myrrha, or do we hear only your union orchestra soughing through Mascagni in the Café de Paris? Do we know the romance of your peoples or the romance of your restaurateurs? Which? I wonder.

Paris has changed . . . it isn't the Paris of other days . . . and Paquerette, little Easter daisy in whose lips new worlds were born to you, little flower of France the music and perfume of whose youth are yours still to remember through the guerrilla warfare of the mounting years—little Paquerette is dead. And you are old now and married, and there are the children to look out for—they're at the school age—and life's quondam melody is full of rests and skies are not always as blue as once they were. And Paris, four thousand miles beyond the seas—Paris isn't what it used to be!

But Paris is. For Paris is not a city—it is Youth. And Youth never dies. To Youth, while youth is in the arteries, Paris is ever Paris, a-throb with dreams, a-dream with love, a-love with triumphs to be triumphed o'er. The Paris of Villon and Murger and Du Maurier is still there by

the Seine: it is only Villon and Murger and Du Maurier who are not. And if your Paquerette is gone forever, there is Zinette—some other fellow's Paquerette—in her place. And to him new worlds are born in her lips even as new worlds were born to you in the kisses of another's yesterday . . . and the music and the perfume of Zinette's youth shall, too, be rosemary some day to this other.

The only thing that changes in Paris is the Paris of the Americans, that foul swelling at the Carrara throat of Youth's fairyland. It is this Paris, cankered with the erosions of foreign gold and foreign itch, that has placed "souvenirs" on sale at the Tomb of Napoleon, that vends obscenities on the boulevards, that has raised the price of bouillabaisse to one franc fifty, that has installed ice cream at the Brasserie Zimmer, that has caused innumerable erstwhile respectable French working girls to don short yellow skirts, stick roses in their mouths, wield castanets and become Spanish dancers in the restaurants. It is this Paris that celebrates the hour of the *apéritif* with Bronx cocktails and "stingers," that has put Chicken à la King on the menu of the Soufflet, that has enabled the *ober-kellner* of Ledoyen to purchase a six-cylinder Benz, that has introduced forks in the Rue Falguière, that has made the *beguins* at the annual Quat'-z-Arts ball conscious of the visibility of their legs. It is this Paris that puts on evening clothes in order to become properly soused at Maxim's and cast confetti at the Viennese Magdalenes, that fights the cabmen, that sings "We Won't Go Home Till Morning" at the Catelan, that buys a set of Maupassant in the original French (and then doesn't read it), that sits in front of the Café de la Paix reading the New York *Telegraph* and wondering what Jake and the rest of the gang are doing back home, that gives the Pittsburgh high sign to every good-looking woman walking on the boulevards in the belief that all French women are in the constant state of desiring a liaison, that callouses its hands in patriotic music hall applause for that great American, Harry Pilcer, that trips the turkey trot with all the Castle interpolations at the Tabarin. It is this Paris that changes year by year—from bad to worse. It is this Paris that remembers Gaby Deslys and forgets Cécile Sorel, that remembers Madge Lessing and arches its eyebrow in interrogation as to Marie Leconte. This is the Paris of Sniff and Snicker, this the Paris of New York.

But the other Paris, the Paris of the canorous night, the Paris of the Parisians! The little studio in the Rue Leopold Robert . . . Alinette and Reine and Renée . . . the road to Auteuil under the moon-shot balda-

quin of French stars . . . the crowd in the old gathering place in the Boulevard Raspail . . . the music of the heathen streets . . . down in the Gardens of the Luxembourg . . .

Yes, there's a Paris that never changes. Always it's there for someone, someone still young, still dreaming, still with eyes that sweep the world with youth's wild ambitions. Always it's there, across the seas, for someone—maybe no longer you and me, exiles of the years in this far-away America—but still for someone younger, someone for whom the loves and adventures and the hazards of life are still so all-wondrous, so all-worth-while, so almighty. But, however old, however hardened by the trickeries of passing decades, those who have loved Paris, those to whom Paris has lifted her lips in youth, these never say good-bye to her. For in their hearts sings on her romance, for in their hearts march on the million memories of her gipsy days and nights.

THE PARASITE

by George Bronson-Howard

If not an "old wives'" tale, it is at least the oldest and the favorite in the Decameron of the Broadway choruses—pity there is no Boccaccio to write it down, that it must be one of a mere Heptameron. All the older girls know it, they who date from the days of hansom cabs at the stage door; those days when Wall Street and the House of Lords seemed principally for the purpose of bringing fortune and fame to languid, lineless ladies: days when girls with voices had been superseded by mere shapely beauties; who, in turn have been thrust forth for diligent dancers. Moreover, too much has been explained in print concerning them, and the Wall Street birds have become gun-shy, the Peerage peacocks no longer find matrimony a necessity. The golden days of '99 have passed: there are poor pickings for the "ponies" of the new regime.

So that, all along the Broadway coast, in the same long, low chorus dressing rooms where in those "good old days" celebrities were made overnight, "without half my looks, either"; youthful would-be buccaneers sigh for an adviser like "Con" Phillips to take them to those dizzy heights of stardom Violet Vandam adorns. Or, that Burton Jarvis who carried Letty Lee to fame. Or that Norman MacKinder who co-stars nowadays with Beth Bohen, or the person known generally as Arcy MacTea, friend of Toya Thiodolf. . . . Which is the longest

story of all, for it touches upon the life histories of others besides: Carolus Lang, the money captain; his flighty and unworthy wife; J. Tubman Lee-minster, polo player and member of many clubs. . . . And over it all hangs the ugly shadow of Milton Lazard, parasite.

I

THE Shadenham Hotel, a favorite nest for birds of prey, was one of that legion between Longacre and the Circle: a legion that, without the patronage of those whose habits, professions or avocations are inimical to law and morality, would close their doors in a week. So that, though preserving an outward semblance of propriety, the managements must train their susceptibilities and those of their staff not easily to be shocked. For in such places flying figures in thin kimonos are ever to be met with between noon and dawn in the halls; many in such scanty garb even taking the elevator from floor to floor, for there is not much likelihood of meeting within their walls anyone that mere breaches of propriety are likely to annoy. Bellboys have been trained to ignore the sound of glass crashing and furniture overturning, of shrill imprecations and hoarsely growled oaths, even the sound of falls too muffled to be chairs or tables. Room clerks learn, after their first report, that the odor they took for cooking opium is only that of some Oriental tobacco; and that no hour is too late for a male visitor to be announced.

But, to the tyro entering the place (the novice, the stranger in New York), there are no outward signs that will prevent any young lady resident from persuading him of her high place in the society of her Southern home, or of her presence in New York for the study of music, painting or dramatic art. Below, the marble floor of the foyer is covered with Oriental rugs, the walls with tapestry or Gobelin burlap. High gilt-encrusted vases and paintings in heavy gilded frames abound. But everything is of that species of imitation "art" at which America excels. The clerk is dapper, the telephone, lift and bellboys are neatly uniformed. Above, in the apartments—there are few single rooms in such places—there is more imitation "art": art nouveau wallpaper and art mission furniture—sufficient to delude the average half-educated American, reared in a home that has not yet rid itself of an aftermath of horsehair and walnut, that the apartment's resident has "artistic" tastes.

It was in such an apartment on a December afternoon that one girl of the Frivolity chorus came to call upon another; finding her, though

the day was far advanced, not yet awake. Nor eke her lord and master, who slumbered on with great snores: while a patient little negro maid waited, and had waited since noon; fearing to move lest she disturb the sleepers. But the young lady visitor had no such scruples, calling loudly from the sitting room door. The lord and master started up—his eyes heavy with sleep, his mouth dry and unwholesome—protesting profanely in a voice that varied between a deep bass and a high squeak.

"It's time you were up—half past three," said the caller calmly. In return, she got a growl of semi-recognition from the pajama-clad one, who shook the sleeping figure beside him violently. "Better get out and stop that broad bawling the roof off," he snarled, reaching for the bag of near-alfalfa and the brown cigarette papers that were always his latest supper and his earliest breakfast.

The girl beside him sat up, her short, scanty blonde hair falling untidily about her face. Had her many admirers seen her then, barren of becoming apparel, the tip of her nose red from the cold—for the windows were open; the circles beneath her eyes unerased by make-up, the eyes themselves red-rimmed, her hair lifeless and burnt from overmuch "marcelling," and most of her *coiffure*—"puffs," made-up curls and "switches"—on the dressing table, they would have failed to recognize the vision that gladdened the restaurants.

As for the parasite, stripped of his fashionable clothes, unshaven, his heavy jowls unrestricted and untamed by a collar, he looked less the part he had given himself to play, more that one nature had assigned him: but, when he rose, to potter over to the coffee percolator which the little negro girl had lit for the fourth time that day, he presented a picture more ludicrous than fearsome. He was like a giant Brownie—a huge head shaped like a coal scuttle, a heavy round stomach and the thinnest of legs and the smallest of feet, which, in one more than six feet tall, made him somewhat of a monstrosity. . . . And so the very youthful visitor giggled; which annoyed the parasite.

"Thirty years of getting my living by my wits, and then to be annoyed by a lot of field mice," he growled heavily. The bass of the growl was not natural; had been carefully assumed for many years to disguise the thin, squeaky staccato of his given voice. He snatched cup and saucer from the trembling Lilliputian negress, and turned on the percolator spigot.

"I came in to show you my new ring," said the caller jubilantly, slipping off one glove and displaying a large cabochon sapphire. "And

he's going to give me another just like it, only a ruby. And say, Lily, you know that man Hardesty brought back stage to meet me? Why, that's Kane—Monty Kane. And he wants me to go to Europe on his yacht with him; and he says if I do he'll put a thousand in the Longacre Bank for me and get Mandelbaum to give me a good part when I come back, and he promised I could have anything I liked in the Paris shops and—"

"He didn't by any chance promise you the Flatiron Building for a chaser, did he?" sneered the parasite, then damned the Lilliputian for her vile brew of Java. But there was another knock on the door before the caller could give her indignant answer, and a third girl, a thin, anaemic creature, a gray crêpe kimono wrapped closely about her, came in. She was followed by a fourth, healthy and red-blooded, smartly dressed for the street. She and the first caller, who had all the splendid color and exuberancy of youth, presented a striking contrast to the two girls in negligee.

"Having breakfast?" asked the healthy newcomer greedily. She sat herself down and, taking up a slice of bread just cut by the Lilliputian, spread it with jam and poured herself a cup of coffee. "Take some more," urged the parasite unpleasantly; "rub it on your chest or in your hair if you can't eat it. Go on. Don't you ever eat at your own expense?" To which the uninvited banqueter only winked, being too busy wolfing bread and jam to speak.

"I wish I could eat like Sarah," said the other newcomer in a peevish, discontented voice.

"You ought to wish you were dead and get it over with," advised the man. "I'll bet my good right arm and my best eye you got another wail about your tough luck to let out of you. Why come *here* with your troubles? Life looks tough enough to a man just out of the hay without a flock of pin-headed broads busting in on him; and when they ain't eating him out of house and home, they're *driving* him out with graveyard groans or some lying yarn or other. Why am *I* the goat?"

"If you're referring to me, Milton Lazard," said loftily the young girl of the new ring, "I'll have you know I'm not in the habit of telling lies. Don't judge others by yourself, you poor thing"—which at that time was Miss Toya Thiodolf's idea of repartee. "Look, girls"—and the history of the ring and the yachting offer was repeated. "You saw the earrings, didn't you, Lily?" The mistress of the apartment nodded, but the anaemic girl betrayed some doleful interest, and the perpetually

hungry Miss Anna Drum, having eaten all she could lay hands on, greedily eyed the sparkling diamond and sapphire drops.

"You couldn't horn me in on the trip some way, could you?" she asked, in intense anxiety. "You know I could help you a lot picking out dresses and jewelry. I used to work in the swellest department store in Chi—first I was cloak model, then selling junk—tortoise shell combs and baby pins and rhinestone buckles and such; and I got to know the real jewelry, being so friendly with the men clerks—"

"And getting them to buy you large hunks of nourishment, or I'm a mangy yellow pup," put in Lazard sourly. "There was chuck concealed somewhere in any friendship *you* ever had."

Miss Drum laughed in loud boisterousness as one who has been paid a compliment. "How about it, Toya, dear?" she continued eagerly. "When do you go?"

"Oh, Arcy wouldn't let me," said little Miss Toya, nestling her smooth olive skin against the soft fur of a huge pillow muff. Anna interpreted her sigh of philosophical resignation with a long intake of breath.

"Well—of all the mean men!" she said. "I suppose he's afraid of losing you if you ever get away from him and live like a lady."

"Lady?" jeered Lazard, his third cup of coffee having translated his earlier growl into a mock-genial satyr's smile. "Lady! She couldn't disguise herself as a lady with that Slavonic map of hers tipping the gaff, and those heavy hoofs of hers. And she better not invite you, Drum, unless she wants the rest of the passengers to starve on that tugboat trip of hers to Coney Island."

"Tugboat! Coney Island!!" cried Toya passionately. "Why, you poor thing, you!!!!"

"Oh, let her alone, Milton," urged the other half of the household.

"Thirty years making my living by my wits and then got to listen to a heavy-headed slab-footed chorus girl talk about passing up yacht trips to Europe and thousands in the bank; just because some thick-headed lover says so," said Lazard in moody wrath. "Why—"

"He says it's best in the end," explained Toya, with the air of one who agrees that she is defending the moonshine of a madman. "Says that once you give in to those rich fellows they don't have any more use for you."

"Oh, they pay for your entertaining conversation, do they—for the honor of being seen with a lot of pin-headed broads? Don't make me

laugh!" returned the man. This time his bitter scorn held a more personal reason, for if this heresy took root in the mind of Lily Lamotte, he saw himself without the wherewithal with which to amuse himself in a certain White Light restaurant, where every night he played Sir Oracle (in motley) to the court of youths and others like himself who gathered there.

"He says, Arcy does," went on little Miss Toya, "that sort of thing's all right for girls who haven't got the brains to do anything else. But a girl who's smart doesn't have to . . ."

Lazard rejoiced that this went unheard by Lily, who had retired to turn the water for her bath. "Oh, and who's got brains?" he snarled savagely. "If yours ever grew the size of a flaxseed you'd blow up. If these Johns who're looking for something lighter than air 'ud only examine your head, they'd find it all right."

Delighted with having aroused his ire—for she hated him beyond endurance for many such contemptuous appraisals—Miss Toya Thiodolf continued in calm, judicial tones: "Arcy says a fellow hasn't got any right to have a girl unless he can better her, unless he can teach her to do something she can't do herself. And he says no man with any self-respect could love a girl that he shared with anybody. He says a real man wants his girl to be *his* girl, or else he don't care very much for her, and if a girl had any sense she'd see that and know that kind of fellow's only with a girl for what he can get . . ."

"Half an orange in the morning and half the room and half a sack of tobacco a week—I suppose I ought to give Lily trading stamps for paying so high for me," snarled Lazard, in mighty wrath. "And does this virtuous little guy of yours believe you got that ring and those earrings and that taxi charge account just because that John's crazy about the sound of your voice?"

"Of course a thing like *you* wouldn't believe it," she responded loftily; "but that's because it's out of your *class*. Arcy says if Lily had a chance, if she didn't have *you*, she could afford to string fellows along, too. But it's just like anything when you need cash, he says—you don't get much of it. You're a fine-looking object for a girl to cheapen herself for! *She* ought to have *her* head examined."

Anna Drum, who had profited herself of this colloquy to wolf several slices of bread and jam and drink the remaining coffee, laughed boisterously again; and the thin, anaemic girl, who was in a like case with Lily, nodded in gloomy conviction. Lazard looked from one to another, his huge moon face purpling.

When he turned he saw that a stranger was in the room—a young man, lacking only an inch or so of six feet but hardily sizable alongside the huge bulk of Lazard: dressed foppishly according to Broadway standards: his clothes more usual to Fifth Avenue. For those were the days of huge padded shoulders; of trousers wide enough for two at the hips and too narrow for one at the ankles; of collars that closed tightly, showing only a wisp of necktie below; of goosebill shoes; when the average American was a discernible freak, blocks away, in foreign countries. Lazard wore all these eccentricities and slashed foldover pockets, heavy coat cuffs with rows of stitching, and turn-ups to his trousers fully a foot wide, besides. The stranger, wearing none of them, seemed to Lazard badly dressed and insignificant.

His identity was immediately established by the trustfully adoring eyes of Miss Toya Thiodolf; and the two men measured each other as do two stranger dogs, neither coming to any flattening conclusion.

"This is Arcy, girls," said little Miss Toya, exhibiting him with even a greater pride than she had shown the ring. The sex instinct plays strange pranks, and these two, alien to one another in class, race, breeding and education, were each desperately infatuated with the other. Lazard could see that she was making unfavorable comparisons between her cherished one and himself, which superinduced one of his usual sardonic speeches.

"So this is the famous adviser of indigent chorus molls—the guy who's got a mortgage on the brain market?"

Arcy did not shine in such exchanges of compliments, knew it, so only smiled deprecatingly. "Come, Kittens," he said to Toya; "you've got to try on some clothes this afternoon, you know, and you've got your French lesson and your music. . . . I'm trying to teach her it's best to cut out this Broadway habit of buying half a dozen ready made suits instead of having one made by a good tailor that'll look well until it wears out," he explained to the others, and, nodding, he took Toya off.

"Say, Lily," said Lazard, as that young woman reëntered the room, "you missed it—you missed seeing a little guy with eyes wide apart just like a smelt, and broad just like a toothpick: that little Slav chorus girl's lover who's going to get you all rich—why, he couldn't take a handful of water outa the East River without getting an icicle down his back. It takes some stupid broad like that little Slav to fall for such a titmouse. The more I see of these *smart* fellows, the more I

realize how lucky *you* are to grab a guy like me. I don't know what it is makes me stick—just habit, I guess."

And, having reëstablished himself in her estimation by this monumental self-assurance and hint of insecurity as to her possession of him, he closed the curtain, and, scorning a bath, began to array himself in those garments that compelled the attention and won the admiration of a certain section of Broadway.

II

ARCY MACTEA, christened Robert Cameron MacThyndall, his nickname due to his habit of signing first correspondence then newspaper contributions with his initials, R. C. MacT., was careful to repress the disgust that his experience in the Lamotte-Lazard establishment had wrought within him; having learned by the experience of others that there was no surer way to lose the average woman than by preaching morality to her. He took another tack with Miss Toya, for whom he cared quite as much as she for him; though he took good care not to betray this.

"Very cheap," said he, taking a monogrammed cigarette from a monogrammed case of gold. A part of his method of inspiring the confidence in strangers was to possess elaborate and costly accessories in "strictly good form." "Very cheap, my dear Kittens. You shouldn't get too familiar with such people. You're judged by your companions in New York; and if you're seen in company with a girl whose telephone number is on the lists of all the club operators, well . . ." He spread his hands with a deprecatory gesture. "The hotel, too: somebody, might see you going in there—"

"I only went in to show her my ring," said Toya defensively. "She was awfully nice to me when I was green in the show business. And I wanted to make *him* look cheap. I wanted Lily to see, if he was so *smart*, why don't he show *her* how to get rings. I hate that Milton Lazard—always acting like he's somebody and smarter than other people, and he's less than nobody at all."

They had entered the waiting taxicab, and Toya ordered the driver to go through the Park before heading for her tailor's address. "The Lazard kind flourishes here in New York like nowhere else," Arcy went on. "That's because nobody knows anybody—or anything. It's just pure check, and keeping up appearances, that wins you anything here. If you're modest and don't dress your part, you land in Harlem and

stay there. But I can't understand this Lazard, if he's got any brains at all, letting that girl do what she does. I suppose he don't care: he figures he'll just use her until something better comes along and then drop her. By the bye, I hear he's horned himself in somehow with that crazy, flighty, dyed and painted old woman, Mrs. Carolus Lang. I remember him now at her reception the other night when I went to write it up."

"That Milton Lazard—at *her* place! Why, how on earth did he? She's a *society* woman," gasped Toya; and Arcy laughed tolerantly. "But she *is*," insisted the girl: "she's always coming to our show and sitting in a box with lots of young society men—don't I *see* her?"

"She pays the bills, my dear Kittens," explained Arcy: "boxes and private supper rooms and orchestras and ragtime entertainers. And New York is full of young society men. They come here from other cities with a few good letters of introduction and a dress suit. They make a good appearance, so they get jobs as brokers' clerks or selling stock or something down in the Street, and they always 'dance beautifully' and have 'charming manners'; and get in sometimes with the 'brass band set'—the bunch that are always having their names in the paper for doing nutty things—even to the 'small affairs.' " All of which was the merest jargon to this child of the lower West Side; where still dwelt her honorable and upright foreign parents, from whom she carefully concealed any such acquisitions as her new jewelry on her Sunday afternoon visits.

"So," went on Arcy instructively, "when these fellows want to enjoy themselves along Broadway, they get on the string of some rich outsider who pays for their pleasure. They're hired by Mrs. Lang just like the nigger orchestra. As for her being in *society*"—he laughed—"her husband might be because he's a really big man—and *being* that, he doesn't care any more for it than he cares for her, and he lives over in Europe somewhere, collecting pictures. But she's quite 'impossible'—as *they* say. Her foolish-looking dyed hair and her horrible white, vicious old face might be overlooked, but she hasn't the brains to make her vice anything but cheap and repulsive. A fellow like Lazard could just about appeal to her—"

"O-oh," said Miss Toya angrily, "I'll tell Lily!"

"Don't be an ass," he advised; "can't you see getting rid of him would be the best thing that ever happened to her?"

"I know, but she *loves* him," argued Toya.

• "Yes, and children love to lick stove polish and puppies like to eat shoe blacking, but it isn't good for them," Arcy returned.

"But I'd *like* to do it—I hate him so," insisted Toya. But—Arcy's brows contracting—she hastened to take his arm and murmur endearments and apologies. "I won't if you don't want me to," she promised.

"He'd explain his way out of it: a woman always believes what she wants to believe; you'd only make enemies of both of them. They'd be telling stories around about you that Leeminster might hear—about your going around with me, for instance. You were very foolish to show those earrings and that ring, anyhow; but I knew there wasn't any use telling you not to wear them—might just as well try that Joshua trick with the sun as tell a woman not to put on the newest thing she's got—even if it's on a desert island and there's nobody but the birds to see her. But you didn't say anything about Monty Kane and that European trip, did you?"

"Oh, *no*, Arcy," she protested, but she protested too solicitously and he shook his head, keeping his temper with an effort.

"All right, if you want to lose Leeminster," he said: "you know that about slander loving a shining mark; and slander comes from envy. If you make those chorus girl friends of yours too envious, they'll surely start lying about you to all the stage door Johns, and it won't be a week before Leeminster hears. And then, good night, Leeminster!"

"I wouldn't care a bit," she pouted: "I'm tired of listening to him tell me all those foolish things he does about being his 'little white angel on a pedestal' and his 'fragrant unplucked flower' and all that stuff. I feel so uncomfortable. And he looks at you so: just like—well, I don't now what, but funny! If he ever kisses me, I'm through with him—there's just something about him I can't stand—"

"Well, I never told you to go around with him," returned Arcy: "you knew him before you knew me. But since you're doing it, I only showed you how to get some of those things you're always complaining about because you haven't got. He's playing a game with you: I simply showed you how to play back. It doesn't do *me* any good."

"Oh, I know that, Arcy," she hastened to say; "but it's so tiresome for us not to be able to be together more." She snapped her little teeth viciously. "He'll have to pay dearly for *that*!"

The taxi drew up before her tailor's. "I do wish I could get some-

thing *big* like Violet Vandam did from that Perine and then tell Lee-minster good night," she said gloomily. "But I hate to give up my taxicab account, and where would I get the money to go to tailors like Koenig and places like Madame Marguery's for dresses if he didn't let me send the bills to him? And—" She looked at the sapphire ring almost as she would have looked into her lover's eyes.

"I'm not telling you to do it—you suggested it yourself," said Arcy impatiently. "Don't try to put the blame on me and say I was so jealous I robbed you of things I couldn't give you myself. I know you women. You want somebody else to make your minds up for you, so you won't have to reproach yourself if things go wrong. Go on in and try your suit on."

"You go ahead and drive anywhere you want to while I'm in there," she urged eagerly.

He shook his head, but concealed his distaste for the proposal: that was quite a different thing from riding with her at another man's expense because *he* could offer her only street cars, to which he did not share her great aversion. "You go ahead with your appointments, and call me up after the theater," he said.

"And you'll be at your place, waiting for me?" she asked anxiously. He nodded, then strode off down the Avenue.

III

"IT'S all very well for you to be so all-fired moral. But if she were your girl and you were in my position you'd do just the same thing. You see, I'm crazy about her, Bobbert. And it's the old half-a-loaf stuff—understand?"

The explanation to his friend of his relations with Miss Thiodolf had been brought about because of Arcy's refusal to sup at Curate's—the famous restaurant which his home-town friend very much desired to see; and in the company of one like Arcy who called celebrities by nicknames. So annoyed had he been by Arcy's stubbornness that, sooner than bring about a breach, Arcy had been impulsive enough to acquaint him with his reasons: Toya was supping there with Lee-minster. This confidence he immediately regretted when he saw looks of shock, pain and disgust mingle on the face of young Mr. Branch. In the society of the small Southern town, the birthplace of both, there was nothing even slightly analogous to Arcy's present equivocal position.

"If I were in your place I wouldn't wait a minute," said Branch indignantly, finding his voice again. "I'd either make her give up *him* or me. If she hesitates she can't care very much for you—"

"But you don't get the angle," interrupted Arcy irritably, "the viewpoint of her class: she can't see why she can't have us both so long as the other affair's platonic. And she sees to it, I'm sure of that. His letters are enough."

"*You read another man's letters!*" asked Branch in a rising tone.

"Oh, my God—cut out that superior attitude! Listen—you're not in Greenborough, where life is laid out on simple lines. This is that large and well known city surrounded by water and money, where things are complex.

"It's these rich men," he went on, scowling, more uneasy at Branch's silence than at his protests; "why can't they stick to their own class? But no! They've got to have their own women and everyone else worth having, too—if money will do the trick. And they've got a patience that's wonderful. And cunning—say, they go after these girls in the show business and in the shops and artists' studios just like they go stalking big game. They're not satisfied to take the experienced ones—oh, no! They want youth, and, if possible, innocence. That stirs their jaded blood. And they don't care how long they stalk or how much they spend or how low they descend."

"That doesn't make *your* end of it any more decent just because *they're* rotten. You ought to forbid her to have anything to do with them."

"Listen, Bob," said Arcy, losing his patience and pounding the table; "you don't seem to realize what living in New York means. These girls get twenty a week. That would give them everything in Greenborough: they could live in nice neighborhoods and have nice things to eat and nice clothes and everything. Here it means living in a dirty street, in a dirty apartment house with paper walls and no privacy, with the smell of leaking gas and bad cooking in the halls—or else miles out in the suburbs where they have to take crowded Subway or Elevated trains late at night and stand for men giving them the eye and crowding up against them in the seats and speaking familiarly, and doing about everything else to make them feel cheap and common—when they're as pretty as Toya is. And then a walk, alone, through a lonely neighborhood at midnight. So that part of it's impossible. Then there's boarding houses: decent ones where you have

any food fit for human beings cost at least twelve a week—and for a hall room at that. Which leaves her eight dollars to dress on and for carfares. Well, she might get away with that, but there's three whole months in the year when the show business is practically suspended, so money has to be saved for that. Precious few are lucky enough to get into a success like 'The Bonbon Girl' every season. Failures mean three to eight weeks of rehearsal without pay. Then if a girl doesn't want to leave New York, she must rehearse for three or four shows a season, not counting the intermissions between jobs. While on the road they get twenty-two dollars per—they raise them a little—and it's almost impossible, traveling, for a girl to have a clean bathroom and a clean bed and decent food. It would be all right if they weren't thrown in touch with a life of luxury all the time. But they are."

"I'm not thinking about her: it's about you, Arcy," began his friend defensively. "You—"

"But I'm trying to *explain me*," exploded the exasperated Arcy. "Those rich fellows deliberately make these girls dissatisfied with the way they've been brought up. If the girl's a nice young thing, on the lookout to defend herself as mamma has taught her, they get the theater manager to introduce them in the most polite, respectful sort of way. A lot of them put money into shows just for such privileges. Then they take her to tea some place where she feels shabby and badly dressed among a lot of idle, gaudy women. And he sends his car to take her home from the theater some nights. And pretty soon he tells her he knows some *modiste* who could make clothes that would just suit her: he'll introduce her and the shop will trust her. Then he says he hates to think of her eating at that cheap boarding house or in those hashhouses—or home where mother cooks cornbeef and cabbage. Some hotel or restaurant advertises in some Wall Street paper he owns or has a share in (generally a lie, that, but it's a recognized part of the system) and he takes out the advertising in restaurant bills. And, as he never uses it all up, it won't be costing him one penny if she signs checks there for every meal she eats every day. Same way about a taxicab account.

"And so it goes on—they've got a thousand tricks: the game's been worked out as scientifically as chess. There's the friend-gone-abroad, saves-money-if-she-lives-there, have-to-get-a-caretaker-for-apartment-if-she-don't, dodge. Anyhow, if they really go seriously after some young girl, no matter how touchy she might be about ac-

cepting money, in a few weeks they've got her used to eating expensive food, taking a taxi to go a block, sitting around in smart restaurants, wearing Paris clothes—and, maybe, living in a beautiful apartment. Now what a chance they're ever going back to smelly Harlem flats or cheap boarding houses, to being jostled and insulted in crowded street cars, to wearing little cheap ready made suits and imitation lace collars! You read about it in books, Bobbert, but it doesn't happen in life, believe me. The girl does one of two things: she either becomes his mistress—which means she'll last with him a few months or a few years, and then has to hunt another; or else, if she's clever, she invents some excuse for putting him off and thinks up some other way of getting his money. And if the last happens, he hollers 'blackmail,' and calls her every kind of name. After he's deliberately taught her to need the things. A hot lot of sports they are!"

"I agree with you," gasped Branch. "Good God—what people!"

"Well, that was the way with Toya," Arcy pursued. "If she hadn't met me, she'd have fallen for Leeminster, I suppose. There's a fine young hypocrite. Belongs to Uplift Leagues and Civic Betterment Societies and Anti-Boss Politics—has a reputation as spotless as the driven snow; passes the plate every Sunday and in one of the fashionable churches—a vestryman, I think; and makes speeches at silk stocking political meetings about 'Down with immorality. Drive the women off the street. Put out the red lights.' Those fellows can't understand why anybody should want to be immoral but themselves. But they don't call their way of doing things immoral. Oh, my, no! Immorality, my dear Bobbert, paints its face very thickly and wears loud clothes and doesn't go to church."

"I'm glad I stayed in Greenborough," said Branch indignantly.

"Everybody there keeps too good a watch on one another for much dishonesty or immorality," was Arcy's cynical answer. "I guess it about comes down to that, Bobbert. And that goes for countries as well as people. Switzerland has the most honest government as well as the most moral people—it's the smallest. And the United States, which is the largest, has the most dishonest government, and—"

"Don't say that about our people, Arcy," Branch interrupted. "America's not New York, you know."

"It's New York and Chicago and San Francisco and the big cities, though, that influence the rest of the country," Arcy replied gloomily. "Look at me, for instance. Down in Greenborough, I had the highest

sort of a sense of honor. Why? Because that was the standard. I come up here and find the only standard is being a 'smart fellow.' And being smart means getting money. . . . You know, I can even understand those fellows who live off women, now. Not that I haven't just as much contempt for them as you have," he hastened to add before Branch could break in with a shocked exclamation; "I saw one of them today—the worst kind they breed, I guess; and my disgust at being in the same room with him almost made me spit on him. He *was* a low specimen. . . . But take a fellow who means well but who's just weak, and put him in my position. (This is my day off or I wouldn't be sitting around talking to you, bet your boots on that.) Here I work on the *Argus* about twelve hours a day; hardest kind of work reporting is—chasing all over the city following a dozen ends to a story, seeing a hundred people a day, snatching a sandwich and a cup of coffee for dinner, generally, then off again for half the night, sometimes *all* night if a late story breaks loose and you have to get it for the lobster edition—the late one. No extra pay for overtime in our business, either. Well, then I meet Toya and go and have supper somewhere—that's *my* first real meal, and my first chance to enjoy myself. And the only places open are the all-night restaurants.

"Now take a man like that who's got a girl. They get home past daybreak, and he's supposed to be at the office by eleven. Now figure—the alarm clock goes off and he's dead to the world, but he has to drag his heavy head off the pillow and forget his aching body and snatch a cup of coffee and off. And every time she says: 'Oh, dearest, take a day off. Get some sleep. You're killing yourself. Sleep until two, then we'll go for a ride and have lunch out in the country.' I guess that sounds rotten! I wouldn't listen, because I'm looking forward to a career; but imagine some fellow who hasn't got much strength of character. He does. Then he listens again, and finally he loses his job. She says: 'Don't worry, dear, we won't starve.' Well, he gets another job, and this time he isn't so scared of losing it. The next time he loses it he don't hurry getting another. They drive around and go into the country as she said, and go to professional matinees and get up late and read novels and what not. Well, finally, the last time he's out, he has such a bad 'rep' for unreliability it's hard to get in again; and he takes that for a sop to his manhood: he tells himself 'I *tried*, didn't I' every day. But, really, he's enjoying himself loafing around, having all he had when he worked, and not having to work. And, pretty soon, he

says: 'What fools fellows are to work themselves into the grave for that little bit of money I made!' He's thinking about how easily the girl borrowed a century note from some rich man.

"Well, that can't keep up, though. Pretty soon, they pawn her jewelry. Then, he don't ask her any questions as to where the money comes from. . . . And all the while he's kidding himself the big opportunity of a lifetime is going to come and hunt him up, and he was wise to wait for it instead of wasting his time on a small job. For most of 'em make less than I do and have to be at the office at *nine* o'clock, not eleven. That's where these vice prevention societies are all wrong about these 'cadets.' Women make as many as they make what the papers call 'White slaves.' It's funny, Bobbert, but there are very few people in the world that deliberately start out to be vicious. Most of them wouldn't know the truth about themselves if you showed 'em: they'd be insulted. They've been kidding themselves too long."

"I hope you'll remember that in your own case," said Branch significantly; then added hurriedly, fearing he had implied too much: "But what about this fellow you saw today—if so few are really vicious?"

"Oh, he was an exception," returned Arcy, frowning. "What a big rat he was—pfugh!—don't let's talk about him. . . . But what do you mean—in my case? What do I gain from Toya seeing Leeminster? I'd be better off if she didn't. The jewelry she gets doesn't help me, and I'm on pins and needles whenever I have to ride in the taxi with her. And I have my position just as I always had, and when we're out together I pay the bills. We don't even live together. Don't get any wrong ideas, Bob. I, personally, don't want Toya to string Leeminster. But I'm not so selfish as to take away her chance of getting a lot of valuable jewelry that will make her independent so if she's out of a job she won't have to stop her French lessons and all that. The poor kid quit school at thirteen and went into a department store. That jewelry will pay for the education that's so necessary if she's ever going to get up in the profession. *My* wages are just about enough to support *me*."

"Oh, well, I dare say you've got plenty of excuses, Arcy," yawned Branch: "you'd have to have for you to mix up a game like this." He looked at his watch. "Well, old man, as this is my last night in New York, I'm going to see Curate's: I wouldn't dare go back to Greenborough without having seen it—and all the celebrities."

"All the *celebrities* catch the last train for the country," growled

Arcy: "they don't hang around supper places; they've got something better to do. It's people who're trying to *be* celebrities. But if you're determined, I suppose it's up to me. Come on."

IV

CURATE'S famous from sea to sea, the scene of farces, novels, a thousand short stories and a million newspaper paragraphs, was in its heyday at that time, and in full flower the hour they entered it—past midnight. All the pretty faces and shapely forms that the audiences of Broadway musical shows had admired earlier in the evening seemed to be here; their escorts, for the most part, middle-aged men whose assumed rakishness sat ill upon them, and younger ones who, it seemed, had found it necessary to drink heavily that it might not be unbecoming to them also: both sorts (in the main) of the unmistakable "Avenue" brand, their impeccable dresscoats, collars, ties, flat-heeled pumps or shoes, and the width of their dress trousers braid, exact duplicates each of the other. It seemed a sort of uniform. To be in the slightest degree original, to vary from type by so much as a larger or extra shirt stud, marked the outsider: it was that dreadful and unforgivable calamity, "bad form": a different viewpoint from that day of real elegance in grooming, the Regency, when he with the taste (or the valet) to invent attractive novelties of attire was the most fashionable: different from the viewpoint of any rational age. But, when conventional men hold power, conventionality must be capitalized, must become a virtue. And every one of these conventionally attired men was a member of exclusive clubs, the holder of a name honored by ancestor worshipers or by Dun and Bradstreet, a part of past or contemporary history.

"It's funny how quickly New York turns individuals into types," Arcy had once said to Toya. "You know those hollow lead moulds that confectioners pour hot candy in and take it out shaped like a man. There must be one of those around here. Those fellows come from everywhere: from all classes; not half of them are born gentlemen, not a quarter born New Yorkers. But, all of a sudden, there's another thin-legged stork looking exactly like all the rest. One tailor in New York not only makes clothes for those fellows but picks out shirts, ties, boots—everything that goes with it. They'd as soon be seen walking the Avenue in their pajamas as wearing something he didn't approve."

J. Tubman Leeminster was not one of the latter sort, Arcy, despite his dislike, was compelled to admit. The Leeminsters dated from the days when "York" was substituted for "Amsterdam." So far as the "Street" was concerned, no Leeminster had ever been forced to take money from the unhallowed hands of its original owners: Leeminsters left all that sort of thing to more recent people; or to those unfortunates of their own class who were burdened with *bourgeois* ideas about love in connection with marriage. Frankly, like embarrassed peers, the Leeminsters had long since looked on marriage as a vocation. They acknowledged their inability to cope with climbing commercials on their own ground: besides, what need, when such would presently invade theirs? So they allowed the new people to make the money, and then, as a great favor, agreed to share it. For three generations, Leeminsters, male and female, had exchanged social position for large quantities of newly laid golden eggs which it then became their life-work to scatter in the manner most agreeable to them, and most disagreeable to their constitutions. With the result that this later Leeminster was a young man of singularly vacuous countenance, scanty hair and an unhealthy pallor.

To see this person with Toya was like a burning brand thrust into the face of Arcy MacTea. "Damn him!" he said viciously. "To think I have to sweat twelve hours a day for forty dollars a week, and he gets everything just for being kind enough to live!" He checked himself, remembering. "He doesn't, though, Bobbert," he added, with a grin: "he's got to marry now he's had his fling—Miss Mac Hefflefinger, the daughter of the fellow who makes those hams you see advertised so much. 'Mae'! I'll bet he shivers every time he sees that Riverside Drive spelling. She'll be 'Mary'—or 'May' at least—on the wedding announcements; see if she isn't."

"And he has the nerve to be seen at supper with another girl?" asked Branch.

"Oh, Bobbert, you weary me," protested his friend. "Curate's is as far from Canary's as the Argentine Republic. The women of his set don't come over on Broadway except to go slumming. And then they pride themselves on being Continental; and, in Paris, if the Faubourg St. Germain crowd goes to Montmartre and sees a duke with a pretty *figurante*, they realize it isn't *his* fault: *they* aren't expected to *be* there; so they pretend they never saw him there next time they meet—officially. . . . You're thinking of Greenborough again; where there's

only two hotel restaurants and everybody has to act like they're in church."

Arcy was talking rapidly, almost feverishly; for Toya was looking toward him; and he must present an appearance of indifference. He knew her nature well enough to realize that one of his strongest holds on her was her belief that he absolutely lacked jealousy—which made her suspect he did not sufficiently love her, and increased her own infatuation. So he resolutely refused to catch her eye. To all appearances, he might not have known of her presence. Now he threw one leg over the other, which turned him completely from sight of her, and continued his animated monologue.

"Look at this bunch in here tonight. There might be a dozen 'professionals' eating after the show because they're hungry; and a dozen more out-of-town people, Harlemites and Brooklynites—though the headwaiter don't give many seats to people he don't know, not at this hour, when the tipping's at its height. The remainder are just Dyak head hunters. Look at these girls. Hardly one's twenty-five. This kind of men want chickens—'flappers' *they* call 'em. When girls get past the flapper stage, if they haven't laid something by, it's them for the college boys. That's the first step downward, and it's fast after that, unless they marry or make good on the stage. And these fellows don't *want* 'em to make good and get independent and choose whoever they want. They discourage it. 'What do *you* want to stick around a stuffy theater for, and sit in cold dressing rooms?' they say. 'A pretty girl like you don't need to. Most of these actresses have to get ahead because they're so unattractive to men. But you . . .' And, will you believe it, most of those poor conceited little fools fall for it. I heard one of them pitying the best known woman star in America, because she saw her plainly dressed, hurrying along on foot, while this girl in a flaming gown rode past in a motor car. Pitied her! Imagine!!" And Arcy burst into a boisterous laugh which was only half real.

But his merriment fled instantly when a uniformed page was heard moving near and murmuring as if to the ears of all at large: "Message for Mr. MacThyndall. Message—" Arcy called him.

"You, sir? Telephone message," said the page, and let one eyelid droop the merest trifle, which he knew would increase the size of his tip: the note's only connection with the telephone being that it had been written at the operator's switchboard. Lacking the easier opportunities of the foreign supper places where men and women have a

common retiring room, Broadway had long ago hit on this method of communicating with some other person in the room without arousing the suspicion of escorts. One simply excused oneself to telephone, and there wrote the message, which was delivered as if it had come over the wire.

"Pardon me, Bob—I wonder how they knew I was here?" said Arcy hypocritically, as he opened the envelope. "Go next door to Noel's, dearest," he read. "I'll pretend a headache or something and get him to put me in a taxi, and I'll just drive round the block and come back. How's the Kitten's papa, precious?" The note concluded with a row of "x's," the approved method for the germless transmission of kisses. Guiltily, Arcy tore it up.

"Lucky she wasn't with me when I got *that*," he said aloud, pretending wholesale roguishness. "That girl must have telephoned every place along Broadway. . . . Well, I suppose I'll have to go, Bobbert."

He noted, grimly, that his friend, who had taken so strong a moral stand on his other peccadilloes, seemed to consider this deception—as he supposed it—of a trusting mistress quite the merriest sort of jest. "And she sitting here all the time!" Branch chuckled. "Say, hasn't this one got a friend? Can't you butt me in somehow?"

Arcy was beginning to weary of Branch. They had been school and college chums, to be sure; but Branch had not progressed in worldly wisdom. Even had Toya's supposed rival been real, and had she had a complaisant friend, Arcy would not have introduced her to the Greenborough man. Such sophisticated maidens only suffered boredom when they were well paid for it.

Then, with a sudden blush for his stupidity, Arcy realized that Branch's viewpoints were identical with those of the very men he had been excoriating: Branch was the average American: what an ass he (Arcy) had been to try to explain the philosophy of quite another world!

"Don't take all that seriously I was telling you, Bob," he said, forcing a laugh. "I only met Toya Thiodolf last week; and I haven't any more to do with what she does than you have. I was only talking to see how much I could shock you; and you fell for it—ha, ha! You seemed to expect to be shocked in the big town, so I couldn't bear to disappoint you. Of course you're right. She'd have to give Leeminster up before she could be *my* girl. I never thought you'd swallow all *that*, honest! Oh, you small-town kid!" By this time he had managed to make

his laugh hearty. "So long. Call me up to say good-bye before you take the train south."

Branch gripped his hand as of old. "I'm willing to know I'm a mark to hear it isn't so about you," he said: "I'd never have got over your being *that* kind of a fellow, Arcy. It would have put me in a horrible hole if you ever came back to Greenborough and I had to invite you over to the house where my sisters are—and where the sweetest little girl in the world's going to be within the next year . . ."

NOEL'S, only a door from Curate's, owed its continued existence very largely to the fact of this proximity; for, although Arcy MacTea was yet to discover it, most of its patrons had reasons for being there somewhat similar to his own.

There is no Noel's in the Broadway of the new generation—a generation being but half a decade on Broadway. But then there existed a night life not dissimilar to that of Paris; of which Curate's represented the center, the Manhattan Café de Paris; Noel's, one of those Montmartre cabarets or bars where gather well dressed Apaches, minor poets and actors. When this place had opened for the eleventh time under the eleventh name, Noel, who was risking all the savings he had gained as a captain of Curate's waiters had gained permission to have a small door cut through into Curate's by which his waiters might come to fill those occasional orders for food which his patrons might give. These in the past history of the place had never been sufficient to defray the heavy cost of maintaining a kitchen: without the loss from which the place could easily be made to pay, as drink orders had always been numerous and were three-quarters profit, sometimes more.

But Noel had never imagined that this was the door to fortune. A modest profit on his investment was all he had hoped for. The existence of the door, however, by one of those curious paradoxes which give life its unfathomable aspect, soon made it impossible for Curate's to handle Noel's numerous food orders and provide promptly for its own customers; so he was forced to provide his own kitchen, after all. Forced? It was now the pleasure of his life; for it added another ten per cent to his already doubled expectations.

But, although his waiters no longer needed the door, unless it was to procure some unusual brand of liquor or cigars, it still remained in constant use. To close it, in fact, would have been to close Fortune

out. One girl had learned of the door soon after Noel opened, and had used it to enter the place—bareheaded, uncloaked, ungloved, surprising everyone—to spend some precious minutes with the object of her affections, while the other man, smiling in the fatuous belief that he had made a conquest, was at that moment in Curate's, imagining she had gone to rearrange her hair or powder her nose. Within the week hundreds knew of the door: a knowledge they disseminated among their kind, carefully concealing it from any others. Thus, on following nights, Noel was covering serving tables with tablecloths and putting in extra and incongruous chairs.

That week Noel began the practice of locking his front door, admitting no one from the street farther than the cloakroom vestibule until he had lifted the curtain and scanned his would-be patron's face: a proceeding that enabled him to plead a lack of vacant tables to any whose presence would complicate affairs for those already within.

And so, as he seemed to be making a determined effort to keep the public out, it used all endeavors to crowd his place. To be admitted became somewhat of a *cachet*, a certificate of standing in Subterranea. He was careful to exclude, at least, all whose personal appearance did not indicate prosperity. Nor was this enough; sartorial splendor must be supplemented by adequate spending or one soon lost honor: Noel could pick and choose now, and he did.

Arcy found favor in his eyes on this, his first appearance, and of the crowd in the cloakroom that awaited Noel's pleasure was the first to be admitted. The ex-waiter-captain congratulated himself on his discernment when his new patron was immediately hailed by that ornamental fixture of his restaurant—Mr. Milton Lazard: deep in whose debt Noel was, for Lily Lamotte was among the first who had used the door in the wall. Since then Lazard had herded in from other cafés many friends and associates. These had become Noel's steadfast patrons: entering around midnight, remaining until dawn; hence calling themselves 'The Breakfast Club.' For them, even on the busiest nights, the southeast corner was always reserved.

Arcy was insensible to the honor of Lazard's recognition, mentally anathematizing Toya for forcing him to identify himself in public with such a person. He approached, therefore, somewhat sulkily.

"Mr. Einstein, Mr. Brown, Mr. Carey, Mr. Satterlee, Mr. Cotterel—my friend Arcy MacTea. As fine a lot of gentlemen as ever scuttled a ship, my boy. Just as harmless as a lot of baby rattlesnakes. You can

trust them with anything you've got if it's nailed down. Take your hand out of the gentleman's watch pocket, Kid Einstein. Always ask a man for the time and see if he won't give it to you before you try to take it. That's what they call etiquette, you black-muzzled, cliff-dwelling kike. Although I know some men so mean they wouldn't let you set your clock by their watch: closer than the next second. Take out your glasseye, Carey, and do a trick for the gentleman. Hurry, hurry, hurry," he bellowed in the tone of a circus barker; "the show is now going on, on the inside. The Chandelier Brothers will jump from chandelier to chandelier—through the eye of a needle—without the aid of a net. On your left, the wild man is about to devour a raw Jew." He bent down as though addressing from a platform some passers-by below. "How did you like it, sir?" "Rotten," the invisible one was supposed to answer. Lazard raised his voice to the barker's bellow again: "You hear what the gentleman says—'Best show on the Island.' That's what they all say. Only a nickel—half a dime."

You are to imagine this monologue punctuated by bursts of wild laughter and the applause, not only of his companions but of many parties at nearby tables. Lazard, conscious of his conspicuousness, made his voice reach as many as possible, succeeding sometimes in engaging the attention of all present; for it was an intimate room; narrow, low-roofed; its patrons crowded together on leather seats along the walls, the center cleared for dancing. But above the din and bustle Lazard's bellow rose whenever he considered he was about to voice some iconoclasm that would add to the reputation he coveted: that of "the man who owned Broadway," "the human night-key of New York," "the man who locks the town up"—such descriptions bestowed by reporters being coveted by semi-celebrities of the Nightless Lane.

Lazard had learned since their meeting that Arcy was a reporter: hence the altered attitude; and, despite his dislike, Arcy was amused. Quite a different person this from the scowling, snarling, unshaven satyr of the Shadenham. His smile was agreeable, his teeth evenly matched and of an extraordinary whiteness; his gestures and inflections were those of one with a genuine talent for clowning. Arcy laughed as loudly as any, and, refusing the proffered refreshment, insisted upon paying his initiation fee. To which Lazard objected loudly, tossing down a yellowback and challenging the waiter to dare receive any other: an openhandedness he took care should never be overlooked; the impression going abroad that he was both liberal to a fault and

annoyed by a surplus of wealth. Even his intimates were not allowed to imagine Lily Lamotte in any way responsible.

"A good little pal," he would assert patronizingly; "a good little pal. I know I can get half of everything she's ever got—only the poor little kid never has anything by the time she gets the bad news from the rent man. And say, I'd *stop* the bad news myself; but as soon as you start *giving* women anything you're *gone*. Go to 'em clean as a snow-bird and they fall. But if *you* start handing shed and doughnut sugar, they start handing it to some nice boy they'd like to see get along. Just mother instinct, I guess. Take care of *them* and they think they're cheated. But let 'em give *you* anything, no matter how petty larceny it is, and it makes 'em happy. They think they're supporting somebody. That's why it's all banked in my name. If I let her know she's drawing fifty a month more than she hands me, she'd blow me tomorrow. I even kid her I'm using some of it. . . ."

Which plausible explanation with a condescending loftiness of delivery belittled the insignificant Lily Lamotte and exalted her amiable consort. The reputation of being an object of the affections of one for the pleasure of whose presence others paid liberally was coveted by Lazard; but he resented bitterly its concomitant reputation—resented it because it gave rise to the inference that his own splendid talents were unable to provide plenteously.

Fearing that such an ill impression might have been made upon Arcy, Lazard now set earnestly to work to remove this and replace it with one of a gentleman adventurer, a soldier of fortune, a romantic figure spinning cobwebs of conspiracy, a hero of splendid hazards. Beads of perspiration stood out on his countenance, as he concentrated on comments and narratives at once humorous and thrilling—in which he was always the central figure.

VI

IT was to the possession of this narrative ability that Milton Lazard owed a laborless life. This accomplishment had early discovered for him his natural element: where young women passed the hat among the listeners; finding, after one or two physical mishaps, it was less hazardous to impose upon females. Equipped with a faithful companion, then, he followed her fortune through the mining camps of the West; until that section knew him too well. Followed one experience with melted tar plus ciderdown, and an enforced ride astride the

narrowest of seats; forcing him to seek the protection of the less barbarous East, accompanied by the prettiest (and youngest) of his many admirers.

His one talent, like his deformed body, was part of an atavism: his paternal ancestor some centuries removed having worn cap and bells in the service of a feudal Fleming, who, in the interest of mirth, had ordered that the illegitimate child of one of his serfs should be deliberately maimed in childhood that he might be forced to adopt the calling of jester and tale teller: *Sieur Huon* shrewdly guessing that a love child, by so splendid a young animal as the serf girl, would inherit to the full the talents of his father—a wandering troubadour, *jongleur*, Rebelaisan-Villonesque poet.

Always there is some explanation for such monstrosities as *Milton Lazard*: the sins of "humanity" are visited upon the "civilization" that permits them. Hedged about by powerful lords and their ladies, the terrible pain that *Sir Huon's* wanton cruelty had caused to torture the unhappy jester must be crushed down, hidden from the sight of men. But the hate and malice it had engendered had been too strong to die unexpressed: at intervals the jester's family tree bore gallows fruit; even to the twelfth and twentieth generation. But it had not been until *Milton Lazard* that the exact portrait of the wretched *jongleur's* son, save for the humped back, was repainted: the huge head, the puny legs, undersized feet and hands. His nature was that same strange mixture of fear and hate, cowardice and cunning; he had the same ability to make jests when there were curses in his heart: he deferred to the strong and tortured the weak. All men and women were, to him, created for but one purpose: that they might be of advantage to him. And his ambition was to lead a life of laborless ease. To him, men who won success by work were not admirable but laughable.

It was a pernicious doctrine he preached, but it had the same doubtful merit of flashy wit that the quips and quirks of the jester had; who always chose sacred subjects for his highest flights. And there is that in men, especially young men, that fears protest lest it show a conventional viewpoint; they fear being conventional more than being wrong. Certain aspects of life are revealed to the clever youngster as other than what they have been taught; so that it is easier to assume that hypocrisy alone shields all other aspects than to discover the truth. Moreover, it is easier to be brilliant at blaming than at praising.

Arcy MacTea being at this earlier stage of mental development, it

was not long before Lazard had removed his dislike: even, as the drinks circulated, caused him to be so eager for the praise of a high priest of the super-knock, that he ventured into those realms of conversation forbidden to the discreet. . . .

VII

"WHAT were you doing sitting there and laughing with that Milton Lazard?" demanded little Miss Toya sharply. "Do you want people to talk about us the way they talk about him and Lily? And after what *you* said to *me*? And there's three girls from our show in Noel's. Tomorrow they'll have it all over the theater!"

"That's rich," returned Arcy, somewhat unsteadily—the night air had not yet blown away the fumes of many Scotches. "You telling everybody you do what I tell you to do and what a smart fellow you've got, and then blaming *me* if you get a bad reputation: I've warned you hundreds of times. And who *asked* me to wait in Noel's? What kind of people did you *expect* me to meet there? Would I have known Lazard *at all* if you hadn't introduced us?"

Toya had no answer for so many arguments. If she had been sufficiently gifted to voice her subconscious thought, her reply would have been that his business was to rectify a flighty, inexperienced girl's mistakes, not to add to them.

Unless one counts those girls unfortunate enough to be infatuated with him—in which cases he had always taken care to select grossly ignorant or brainless ones—Lazard had less success in convincing women than men. Women, if they are not blinded by passion or vanity, seldom err in detecting baseness of character; seldom fail to be aware of the hallmark even if they do not appreciate it. It is only that their sense of logic, being a scant half-century old, has not been sufficiently developed to give synthetic reasons for results; and this is to their benefit rather than to their hurt; for one cunning of argument may twist to his will the thoughts of those who put their faith in it; while a woman, whom the subtlest philosophy influences not at all—in personal matters at least—is not turned by it from her original impressions and purposes. So—

"I don't like that Milton Lazard. He's no good. Please don't be seen out with him, Arcy." Finding her anger unavailing, she had descended to a more dependable weapon. "You know he doesn't like *you*. He's jealous of you: he hates everybody who's smarter than he is.

If he's so bright, why's Lily doing *what* she's doing? Terrible: an awful nice girl like that—if you get her by herself. But he has such a bad influence on her. I wish he'd go and marry that rich old woman, Mrs. Lang. Lily would get along all right then—"

"Lazard hasn't got anything to do with what Lily is," returned Arcy irritably. "He's a fool, smart fellow as he is, to stick around with that kind of a girl. What was she when he met her? Just the same. Wasn't even bluffing at the stage . . ."

"Lily didn't *tell* me she supports him," defended Toya indignantly: "I just *know*. *She's* always saying he makes his own money, too. But I'm surprised at *you*, Arcy: supposed to be smart and everything . . ."

"It's a good thing I've got a regular job and people see me working every day," returned Arcy, "or I suppose they'd be saying the same about me. I tell you, Lazard's made all kinds of money. He don't care about her. He's only sorry for her, afraid she'll commit suicide or something if he breaks away. *He* can't change her any. She's got no *ambition*. She don't *want* to study like *you* do. . . ."

Toya shrugged her shoulders. She ceased to argue, for Arcy had taught her that what she considered argument failed to convince anyone; but her vision of Lazard was unalterable. "Well—you'll see," she could not forbear adding, however, as they entered Arcy's rooms.

Arcy had a studio apartment overlooking the rector's garden of an Episcopal church which, save for the ivy-covered brick wall which hid the sidewalk, gave him an uninterrupted view of lower Fifth Avenue. Here it was like London. The houses had that beauty architecture alone cannot give—age must assist. There were polished brass knockers on white paneled, mahogany or rosewood doors; pilasters that had the grace of ancient Doric columns, spiral handrails of green bronze or of brass, ornamenting short flights of long, thin marble doorsteps. In the basements below, in the drawing rooms above, were window boxes of brightly colored flowers or of creeping plants; on either side of doorways closely clipped dwarf evergreens in miniature tubs, or else, where there were wooden doorsteps, more oblong boxes of flowers. More than one house was set amid rosetrees, hydrangeas, chrysanthemums and other hardy growths. Only the rector's garden was walled: this, which Arcy's windows overlooked, was a long, pleasant lawn, a fountain in its center bordered with flowers, in the pool of which swam gold and silver fishes. Here the nurses of a *crèche*, where workingwomen left their children for the day, were allowed to

bring their small charges to roll amid garlic and buttercups and clover—for it was like a piece of meadow brought intact on a magic carpet. Robins and swallows, in spring, nested in the ivy or under the quaint chimney pots of the old rectory; and these, no doubt, had brought the pollen of those growths of the open country. Occasionally catbirds came, blue jays, too, and in an old hollow tree a swarm of bees had recently installed a queen.

For these sights and sounds Arcy had been willing to disburse almost half his weekly wage: and before meeting Toya, had spent much time seated at the large bay window watching and listening, pen in hand, to record the inspiration of the moment: Arcy's ambition had been the production of historical novels; and in this Old World corner, staring at stained glass windows to the accompaniment of the mellow pipe organ rolling forth Gregorian chants, his blood had been stirred by the exploits of his dead and gone heroes, and finding the inspiration he sought, he had written steadily and well.

Toya's advent had changed all that. He had not added a chapter to his novel since their mating. Yet still his surroundings served a purpose. Coming down here away from the tawdriness of Longacre, she had been impressed and had begun to realize there might be reasons after all why he would not readily marry her; even though his infatuation had swept away most of his resolutions. And she, being wise beyond her years, had ceased to speak daily of marriage; finding a safer road to its achievement by adopting new tactics.

"It isn't as if you'd taken up with one of those big cats," she had purred; "it's only a little kitten, and her papa can teach her anything he wants her to know, can't he?" Here she nestled closer to him. "And he can make her an educated kitten that he'll be proud of, too. 'Cause it's a smart little kitten—it's a smart little kitten," she crowed. "Isn't it, papa?"

Which, were chroniclers honest, is a saner speech than most endearing ones exchanged between infatuated young couples. And it had delighted Arcy. "That *is* a smart kitten," he approved; "and her papa will see it gets its little education." Neither seemed greatly in earnest, but neither had ever been more so. On the following day, Arcy had laid out a course of reading for her, and had taken her to a retired governess who was to superintend, and assist in, her study. Singing lessons had followed. The reformation in clothes had come before that.

All of which had so impressed the great Bob Ledyard that, when he had put on "The Bonbon Girl," he had promoted little Miss Thiodolf to a small part. And where J. Tubman Leeminster had once pursued perfunctorily, an amateur collector after a pretty butterfly, he was now as grimly determined as an enthusiastic naturalist chasing the rarest of Venus moths.

It was on the subject of Leeminster (his favorite grievance) that Arcy spoke when they sat before the small studio fire that the early autumn chill had rendered necessary. "Here we could have been home long ago," he said gloomily. "How am I ever going to get my novel done if I have to wait for you three nights a week before I eat my supper?"

"But you used to say you didn't enjoy it unless I was there," she reproached: "you don't care for me like you did at first. That's what I get for giving myself to you. You're beginning to get tired of me. If I'd held you off the way I've done with all the others—"

"O-Oh," returned an irritated Arcy, "it's because I *do* care. It just makes me wild to think a fellow like that has the power to 'command your presence' just like a king. . . ."

"But think of what the jewelry alone is worth, darling dear," the girl pleaded, slipping down to the hearth rug and resting her head on his knee. "Suppose I'm out of a job. Or you are. Or if either of us is sick—or anything; we'd have these. And he's going to give me a big cabochon ruby some time this month. I know his little game. He's getting ready to tell me he's got to marry that Hefflefinger girl. How did you find out about her, Arcy? You never told me."

"It wasn't printed because old man Hefflefinger owns stock in one of the big newspaper syndicates; and he doesn't want the engagement announced until everything's settled. Those big newspaper owners swap favors, suppressing news if it isn't *too* big. The lawyers are fighting it out. Leeminster's attorneys want too much: the marriage settlement, you know. Leeminster won't take any chances with papa-in-law's generosity. He knows the viewpoint of the plain people about a husband who lives on his wife. He's seen too many things happen to other men in his set. The purse strings make the monkey jump: if the wife holds 'em, he must jump her way. Can't get anything to spend unless he explains what it's for. And where would he have the money to buy you cabochon rubies then? He's only getting it now—at loan shark interest—on the strength of his coming marriage."

"He was telling me that tonight," said Toya indignantly. "He thought he was being *very* smart—said there was a rich girl who *wanted* to marry him, and he was letting people think he was going to, because the moneylenders would let him have lots of money that way. I wasn't to let on he was going to marry *me*. That would ruin everything."

"You bet it would," agreed Arcy: "the girl, of course, is going into this with her eyes open: money for social position. But she's making her old-fashioned father think she really loves Leeminster, and that he loves her. Only his people won't recognize the match and call on her unless Leeminster's put on his feet and made independent. The old man swallowed that, somehow—so the society woman who gives our society reporter his inside stuff says—another broke aristocrat. But if Pop Hefflefinger ever found out Leeminster didn't care for his daughter, didn't intend to be any more of a husband to her than he could help—Lord! Pop's after a grandson and heir, and if he thought he would get one only so that the kid's parents could lay hands on the rest of his fortune, the thing 'ud be o-double-f, *off*. . . . Why, what's the matter, Kittens?"—for Toya had begun with a ripple, ending with a spasm of laughter.

"Suppose he saw the letters Tubby wrote me," she finally elucidated. Arcy nodded. No glimmering of what he was to do had as yet lit up the matter of those letters.

"Well, I should say so," he agreed. "I was just thinking something like that tonight while I was waiting for you. About twelve girls in evening clothes without any wraps or anything came in and sat down with some fellow for a while and then went off again. Lazard explained to me about the door in the wall: told me who the girls were. I got to thinking. The men those girls had left in Curate's all had big fortunes. Not one could afford to get his name in the papers with that of a chorus girl. Yet, when one throws a girl down—as they always do—if the girl tries to get anything they call it blackmail, and then lawyers scare her so she shuts up and forgets it—"

"Serves her right for giving in to a man she doesn't love," yawned Toya, uninterested in the affairs of her own sex. "You'd have done the same if you hadn't met me," accused Arcy. She denied this indignantly; and the colloquy veered to more personal grounds, became a minor quarrel. Which ended as such affairs generally do in interchanges of endearments quite too silly for a place on a printed page—even in a

day of Indianapolis fiction less mentally nourishing than the confectionery it endeavors to imitate.

VIII

ARCY found himself wakeful that night, so in that enchanted realm just preceding slumber, where imagination becomes reality, saw himself addressing the young men to visit whom those twelve girls had come through the door in the wall. He did not fancy their lack of character in permitting the girls to worship both Eros and Mammon; but his own complaisance in the matter of Toya's suppers with Leeminster led him to make excuses for them. He saw himself urging them to advise the girls to save tangible evidence in the shape of letters, telegrams, cancelled cheques and so forth and with them regain their independence; arranging the matter through a lawyer's hands in a perfectly legal way. It was then that there occurred to him the significance of Leeminster's letters to Toya: letters written during the "try-out" of "The Bonbon Girl," to various outland theaters. They had already served one purpose: reading them had convinced Arcy of the absolute innocence of Toya's relationship, for Leeminster wrote as respectfully as to a girl of his own class.

Arcy, who possessed an uncommon memory, now visualized one or two. They were the sort of letters any girl would be proud to receive from a fiancé. . . . Arcy chuckled hugely. Toya could have what he coveted for her: a finishing course at the Paris conservatory, emerging therefrom polished, accomplished, possessed of *savoir faire*, fit to adorn the stage of any country. With her beauty she need never return to America unless she chose.

It was all he could do to keep from awakening the girl and acquainting her with her good fortune. But, he reflected, it was as well to be silent even to her: she would find it difficult to avoid crowing over her triumph, surrounded each night by envious, or admiring, acquaintances, ten girls in her dressing room alone. No, it would wait until the announcement of Miss Hefflefinger's engagement to Mr. J. Tubman Leeminster. Then the bombshell, before Leeminster could play his hand—which Arcy imagined would be to tell Toya he was marrying "Mae" only to gain the huge settlement; after which he would behave so badly that she would be forced to divorce him—"and—then—sweet-heart . . ." Meanwhile, although a cruel fate withheld his name from her for a brief space, were they not truly one in divine sight? . . . Not

original, truly, but it has convinced millions, will convince millions more, *is* convincing thousands at this moment. To Leeminster, it meant the capture of the quarry or giving up the chase.

Early on the following day Arcy visited Toya's apartment, took Leeminster's letters from their all-too-evident hiding place, and in her name hired a safe deposit vault for their safe-keeping. Toya, at her singing lesson, knew nothing of it; nor did he inform her: even went so far as not to mention again to her the possibilities the girls who use the door in the wall were overlooking. But, finding this topic ensured attention at Noel's, he spoke upon it many times for the edification of Lazard and others of the patrons: his visits to their rendezvous being another explanation not vouchsafed Toya. Her dislike for Lazard permitted no common sense view of their acquaintance. Now and again, Arcy had an uneasy sentience as to the superiority of her intuition over his logic—in this matter at least.

But it was not difficult to understand the attraction Lazard had for such as Arcy. There were many others not of Subterranea to be found in his company: besides the reporters for theatrical journals, several actors, a poet, a writer of popular songs.

In none did he inspire that friendship which is the wonder of women. None were solicitous of his welfare, none would have placed their purse at his disposal in misfortune. They sought Noel's as audiences seek out that theater advertised as having the most amusing play. Lazard worked hard for their laughter; like the comedian over the way who was paid his weight in gold yearly, he came to his evening's performance rehearsed and ready.

To the craftsman in humor, who must grind out laughs by the yard, Lazard's method would have been apparent. His was not spontaneous humor: he worked by formula, was amusing only on certain subjects. A detective couldn't catch a cold: couldn't find the third rail in the Subway: couldn't locate a Saratoga trunk in a hall bedroom, and so on, *ad infinitum*, regarding the stupidity of detectives, a mere reversal of the average belief in their astuteness. As for thieves, another class popularly supposed to be clever, a thief couldn't steal a bunch of grass from Central Park, or a handful of water out of the East River without getting an icicle down his back; or a swindler couldn't get a biscuit for a barrel of flour. Philanthropists wouldn't give the Lord a prayer; were closer than the next second. A woman who aimed at society—he was referring to Mrs. Carolus Lang at the time—"couldn't get into

the Haymarket"—a disorderly resort—"with a letter from the Pope." . . . The latter phrase yields a second key to his method: an irreverence that stopped at nothing. There were no sacred things to Milton Lazard. Once, when in straits more desperate than usual, he had deemed it a rare jest to send to his old mother a telegram announcing his own demise, asking for funds to save the body from the potter's field, signing the name of a friend who received the money and who shared in the spoils—the mother, on an annuity, having hitherto refused to pauperize herself further after yielding for years to his demands. He told this story as a *chef d'oeuvre*. But it was not until after Lazard's betrayal of him that Arcy subjected his wit to analysis, discovering its mechanics. For the few weeks of their acquaintance, he hardened his heart to any inner whisperings that hinted the acquaintance was a mistake. And Lazard played his fish like the veteran angler he was. Such tales as his imposition upon his mother were reserved for other ears. He knew Arcy's limitations—as he would have described them—and stayed within them; for he was anxious that the reporter should be his friend.

Lazard was, even then, contemplating marriage with Mrs. Carolus Lang: the doctors' reports from the Cannes chateau tending toward the belief that the veteran financier would not live out the year. But before Lazard could be married again, he needed money that he might divorce the concert hall singer he had married away back in the days of his youth: had married because she was just then the rage of mining camps and earned a large salary, and because she would not yield it to him in any other way. But she had soon been supplanted by a younger and better-looking woman. Now she was singing in the moving picture houses, and needed money herself. She had written, in answer to his question, that she would divorce him if he paid the expenses and gave her a thousand dollars. He had not yet the courage to approach Mrs. Lang for a loan. After succeeding in impressing her that he loved her unselfishly, he was not yet sure enough of her to dare arouse possible suspicions that he was mercenary. And Lily's earnings only sufficed for expenses.

It was in Arcy that he saw his salvation: the new jewelry Toya was displaying seemed to Lazard but the natural concomitant of cash she must be receiving. He judged Arcy by his own standards and could not believe that he would fail to profit by his wealthy rival's infatuation. Himself, he would soon have driven Leemminster away by his greediness,

"Never mind the junk," he would have advised her; "say you need money to pay the mortgage on the old home—he'll fall for anything." Which was the reason Lily Lamotte kept her admirers so short a time.

Lazard had not the foresight—even in his unpleasant occupation—to play the waiting game. Like most potential criminals, he was too eager for immediate rewards.

His resolution to ask Arcy for half of the necessary money for his divorce—he had some of his own, laid by without Lily's knowledge—was hastened by the events immediately following the announcement of Leeminster's engagement. For, on that same day, Toya's lawyers approached Leeminster's with photographs of the letters, the announcement of a breach of promise suit to be instituted, and an inquiry as to whether their client wanted to compromise. Leeminster had made frantic efforts to reach Toya for days preceding this announcement; but Arcy had deemed it wise that she should plead sickness, absenting herself from the company and retiring to Atlantic City—so that Leeminster might imagine the suit was brought because of imagined unfaithfulness. Whereas, if she would only give him "a chance to explain . . ."

As he failed to locate her, either before or after the announcement, and her lawyers were obdurate: either he must compromise within two days or the suit would be filed—he compromised. Knowing old Hefflefinger's distaste for the engagement, anyway, the absolute certainty of his fierce denunciation and the severance of all connections, once those letters were published, he had recourse to the twenty per cent men again and paid over one-tenth of the hundred thousand demanded.

Needless to relate, these latter developments were not recorded in the public press; and all might have gone well had Toya been able to restrain the delight of her realized ambitions. But she was, as has been stated, in the company of many other girls each evening: ten dressing room mates, all of whom she considered her dearest friends. They knew, of course, that she was giving her two weeks' notice, was departing for Paris; and as they pestered her with questions as to her financial fairy, presently under the seal of confidence—she being wild with desire to confide in somebody, anyhow—she told several. And Lily Lamotte carried a bitter wail to Milton Lazard.

"... always telling how smart *you* are, and what have you ever done for *me*? And running that Arcy down. And look what he's done for *her*. And he hasn't made her cheap and common doing it, either,

although you say they're both liars. Well, if they are, nobody knows it. She can hold her head up. And she'll come back and be a star after studying in Paris, and what'll I be? A tramp just like I am now. Oh, I wish I'd listened to her. Everybody always said I was out of my class being with you—"

"You bet you were," he returned savagely. "But you used a step-ladder, not a diving bell. You were so close to the ground when I met you, you couldn't kick a duck in the stomach." He had caught up his hat and coat and now slammed the door behind him, divided between elation and resentment: overjoyed that Arcy should have no excuse now for refusing his request, hating the reporter bitterly for having succeeded where he had failed—he the infinitely superior man. He had lost caste in the eyes of the girl who worshipped him: a state of affairs that might terminate in his losing Lily before she ceased to be necessary.

But his egotism did not permit him to admit even the possibility of Arcy's superiority. He laid it to a pestilential luck, growling viciously at the man who was to benefit him: "a half-wit if ever there was one," he told himself, remembering Arcy's "narrow-mindedness" which compelled him to delete some most delectable details from his favorite stories. "Just a lucky little sucker," he added, and regained the stature lost by Lily's harangue.

He was again the patronizing critic of the universe when he entered Noel's. Arcy was not there. It was past theater time and, since Leeminster had been eliminated, he came only while waiting for Toya to finish her performance, over an hour before. Lazard repaired to other and more seemly restaurants; but the pair were to be found in none of them. And then he committed a grave error of judgment: he should have remembered Toya's intense dislike for him, should have realized Arcy would not advertise his acquaintance with him, Lazard, lest she hear of it. But now that the money seemed so near, he could not wait: he plunged on downtown and rang Arcy's doorbell. The door was opened by Toya, who, with the sleeves of her shirtwaist uprolled, was assisting in packing. She viewed Arcy with disapproval when he welcomed his visitor.

"We're sailing day after tomorrow," he added. "The *Chartic*. Excuse me if I go on working, will you? Have a drink and a cigarette, or a cigar—they're all in that little cellaret over there." Toya had not greeted him; nor did she. Lazard began to realize he had chosen an

inauspicious time and place. "Didn't know you were busy, old pal," he said, taking up his hat again. "Meet me tomorrow and have lunch, will you?" But a glance at Toya's mutinous face told him he had again erred and that, as she was free at that hour, she would make it too uncomfortable for Arcy to keep the engagement. Therefore—

"I'd like to speak to you a moment now—in private," he said. Strangely enough, Toya seemed to disregard this entirely: even when Arcy excused himself she did not turn. He led Lazard into the bedroom and closed the door. Simulating stress and suppressed excitement, Lazard told a story of dire need: a loan that was being called on a piece of property worth ten times the mortgage value—he would give him a duly certified mortgage on it tomorrow. Meanwhile his postdated cheque would guarantee Arcy against loss.

There is no doubt that Arcy would have refused; but he would have found excuses for doing so: money tied up just then, would arrange it next day—thereafter avoiding Lazard until sailing day—such moral cowards are men. But he was saved the lie. Toya had thrown open the door, her gesture dramatic. "I'd like to see you lend any money to that poor thing!" she said; then in a fulmination of scorn: "I thought you were up to some tricks so I listened. What do you take us for, Milton Lazard? Think everybody's a softy like poor Lily? I'd rather throw it in the river than lend it to you. You're so *smart*, why don't you get some of your own? *Smart!* Yes, to silly Lilys who don't know anything!"

Black hate bubbled in Lazard's mouth; his eyes burned. "I guess if that Leeminster knew what you doped up on him, it might cost you more'n I asked for," he said thickly. "They call that blackmail." At which Arcy, hitherto annoyed with Toya, shifted sides.

"So that's the kind of a big rat you are, eh?" he asked. "That closes your act with me." As Lazard clenched his fists, MacTea caught up the fire-tongs. In these strained positions they remained a moment: until Lazard, with an ugly laugh—for he had thought of something from which fire-tongs were no protection—turned and strode rapidly from the room.

The waiting taxicab, the cost of which would have been but a drop in the ocean of what he had expected to bear away, now irritated him beyond measure; so, observing that the chauffeur dozed on his seat, Lazard, closing the house door noiselessly, hurried away. The same malice that had caused the misshapen jester to visit poisoners for po-

tions of red toadstool, which, dropped into the drink of the men-at-arms, would punish them with cruel griping pains for their sport at his expense, now seethed in his descendant. That Slavonic servant girl to insult *him*! That poor little lucky sucker to call *him* a rat! Why hadn't he beaten their heads in—he could have wrested those tongs away easily! Not willing to admit to cowardice, he told himself it was because he had a better way to pay his score. He grinned, he sneered, he went into ecstasies of gloating . . . and, long past midnight, after visiting three clubs, he found Mr. J. Tubman Leeminster; who received him with almost as distant an air (Lazard's exaggerated clothes betrayed him) as had the club porter. Which, threatening Lazard's self-estimation as it did, almost ruined his object by sending rudeness to his tongue tip. He controlled himself, however, and spoke without emotion. . . . If someone had deliberately tricked Mr. Leeminster, had repaid his favors with ingratitude, entering into a most iniquitous plot against him . . . was it worth Mr. Leeminster's while to know? He referred to Miss Thiodolf—to cut short a long story. Leeminster darkened. What did he mean?

"She never had any intention of marrying you. She was in love with another fellow. She only wanted what you could give her; was going to throw you over anyway? If you could prove this, could you get back that blackmail money?"

"Blackmail?" thundered Leeminster.

"What else?" asked Lazard.

A moment of silence: then, unable any longer to command the venom that his brain was spewing into his mouth, Lazard became vicious. "She had a fellow long before she ever met you. She didn't aim so high as you before. Any kind of a man would do." So full of hate was he, he had to shut his lips tightly lest he betray himself. It is not certain he did not believe he was speaking truth. Were that heavy-headed guy and that heavy-footed girl superior to him and his? Getting himself into better control, he piled up disgraceful details for Leeminster to hear: realistic and convincing details culled from ugly personal experience. And then added stories read in sensational newspapers: a drugged drink, a promise of marriage, a horrible awakening . . .

He had seen how solemnly the public believed such tales: how effective they were in arousing editorial indignation. Himself, he had not found it worth while to angle for innocent girls: poverty had

already done the work drugs and promises of marriage were supposed to do; but poverty did not make melodramatic reading, and it shifted the blame onto the shoulders of those upright ones bent on suppressing "the traffic." Women who plead poverty for an excuse did not get the sympathy, attention, widespread publicity of those who sobbed of lurid lures. Lazard knew many girls who had discovered that the easiest way to escape legal penalties was to disclose harrowing details of organized "cadet" bands of which they were victims. He, even more unscrupulous, had no hesitation in adding anything that would put Leeminster in a rage, that would ensure extreme measures.

"A white slave?" gasped that young gentleman; whose taxicab accounts and jewelry had made a few—as the phrase has come to be used. But he had done so quite legitimately—for his royal pleasure: and he was not for a moment to be confused with those abandoned wretches who did it for a livelihood.

Lazard was overjoyed. "A white slave," he confirmed, rejoicing at his acumen in adding the effectual melodrama. "A white slave, that's what." He was possessed of his ancestor's crafty coward's intuition: had seen Leeminster would not be receptive to any evil tales of Toya: therefore Arcy should suffer for both. "And that's the fellow who'll be spending your money in Europe in a week or so!"

Leeminster started up, kicked over an ottoman, stamped noisily about the private cardroom. Exhausting his vocabulary, he sputtered: in wild wrath, he banged his fist on a little green-topped table which, being collapsible, collapsed. To hear him one would have imagined he had given Toya the purest, most unselfish devotion. If, almost, he deceived Lazard, certainly he deceived himself. He was Sir Galahad the Spotless, rescuer of maidens from monsters, Perseus arming himself to save an Andromeda and slay a dragon. One might have believed he was superior to wounded vanity, hurt pride, the loss of money, the desire for revenge. For the moment, it seemed Miss Hefflefinger's fortune might go hang: mattered only the rescuing of "that poor little girl." . . .

Lazard knew when the first fury had spent itself Leeminster would return to sanity; realizing on the way that no steps could be taken which would jeopardize the announced alliance. Which would forbid any prosecution for blackmail, even for obtaining money under false pretenses. The blacker the girl's character the less able he would be to explain satisfactorily those letters. This became apparent to Leeminster

after a moment of calm consideration. Then as violently as before, "I'll half murder that blackguard," he breathed heavily. "Where can I find him? Wait till I go home and get a horsewhip. Then you just point him out to me. I'll settle *him*."

But Lazard, having won, was suave. "And get your name in the papers and have the whole story come out? Let the law settle him. Oh, I know"—this to Leeminster's impatient wave of the hand—"I know. Not by any lawsuit or prosecution. Isn't this fellow a danger to the community? And haven't I seen you around a lot with the District Attorney?" He paused, seeing he had Leeminster's attention. "Now's where I come in—I don't pretend to be doing all this for nothing: you wouldn't believe me, anyway. I need a thousand. If I show you how to put MacThyndall away for two years without mixing your name in it at all, you'd *give* me a thousand, wouldn't you?"

For a moment Leeminster did not answer: sat sneering, staring with fishy eyes. "I suppose you're another one just like him. You've been friends and he did something to you—eh?" Lazard, crushing down a desire to close those cold, superior eyes, rose and, having studied human nature over the poker table, and knowing the value of bluff, made for the door. Leeminster stopped him. "I don't suppose it matters *why*," he grumbled grudgingly. "Set a thief to catch a thief. All right. If he goes away you get your thousand. You'll have to take my word," he added, anticipating correctly the request on Lazard's lips: a bitter blow to the parasite, unprovided for this, having been too occupied with his hatred to think of it: imagining the money paid down that night.

But his brain was quick enough in such matters. "If you don't pay me, I'll let MacThyndall know the whole business anonymously, and, as I won't figure in it, you'll get into trouble," he said insolently.

"I didn't expect one of your stripe to understand a gentleman may do anything but break his word—even to a blackguard," was Leeminster's contemptuous retort. "Go ahead."

"Well, then," said Lazard, after a sulky pause, "there's a door between Curate's and Noel's. While you fellows are in Curate's with these girls, they make some excuse and slip into Noel's to tell the fellows there when they can get rid of you."

He enjoyed seeing Leeminster wince, regained some of his enthusiasm. "She's not the only one. There's fifty or sixty girls do that. This MacThyndall's been talking to them, telling them to go off somewhere

and get you fellows to send 'em telegrams and letters so's they'd have something to hold you up with when you try to throw them down. That's wholesale blackmail, ain't it? If the District Attorney lets *him* get away with this, there'll be ten cases like yours a month. You fellows won't dare to have Broadway girls at all. And the D. A.'s one of your bunch. Well, do you know how the D. A. or the chief handles a dangerous guy that they can't get anything *on*? They 'frame' him, drop a gun in his pocket: then they have some strong arm guy pick a fight with him, and plant the gat while they're fighting, lose the other fellow and arrest the one that's framed for. When he's searched before they lock him up, they find the cannon. Pretty neat, eh? I'd like to have a dollar for every fellow they've put away like that."

Forgetting his grievance, Leeminster clenched his fist, almost lashed out with it at the malicious, self-satisfied, grinning face. Remembering, he transferred his hatred to the one who had mulcted him. "Will you tell Mr. Knipe what you told me?" he asked sourly. "About that door between Curate's and Noel's and how this fellow's been advising you and your fine friends to wholesale blackmail?"

"If my name's kept out of it, you bet I will," was Lazard's savage response.

"I'd like to see that guy's face when they find the gun."

"Come on then," said Leeminster. "We'll catch him if we hurry." He did not find it necessary to state that the official sought played poker at the River Club until a very late hour. Nor did he wait for the porter to summon a taxicab and receive his legitimate commission both ways. Which gave rise to grave doubts in the mind of that functionary whether or not Mr. Leeminster was really a gentleman.

IX

WERE this tale told in the year of the events recorded, widespread indignation would greet the statement that as Lazard conjectured so did it come to pass. But much calcium light has flooded the dark places of punitive departments since the days when the center of the theatrical belt was presided over by the Bennett owls and the statue of Horace Greeley, since hansoms waited at stage doors and their occupants might make merry until dawn. Exposure has followed exposure. To discover what sort were they who could go about the business of assassination in motor cars, the searchlight has soared beyond the clay feet of Manhattan and found its face of brass. Other than one who protects the

shame of high places now rules in the office of District Attorney: his hand has helped turn upward the searchlight. But the man who played late at the River Club had personal reasons for wishing to see the sport of kings protected. It was enough that there were rude rascals who poached upon the preserves of gentlemen; but when one bade them stand and deliver besides, an example must be made that would strike terror into his like.

It had been largely through this gentleman's activities that the statute legalizing common law marriages—that is, when a woman had lived a certain number of years with a man she was entitled to the name and privileges of a wife—had been repealed, to save from annoying *mésalliances* many sons of the rich who had mistresses. Now, when he heard of the activities of Arcy MacTea, he voiced a belief that, should this man go unpunished, here was a danger quite as great: gentlemen soon would be unable to bait traps with luxury and cease supplying the bait, at their pleasure. It was impossible not to do or say something compromising even if one wrote no letters. Which, like that dastardly common law marriage statute, was a direct blow at the liberty the common people had fought to give men of birth and fortune. Were prerogatives gained in a Revolution to be endangered? He guessed not!

But he also did not guess at the fact that he was to bring about his ears a nest of hornets which up to now had been disguised as honey-giving bees. The newspapers had hitherto supported him under the impression that one of independent fortune would be more honest than a professional politician. But, when Arcy, imprisoned at police headquarters, had sworn many oaths as to the outrage perpetrated upon him and had convinced the star reporter of his paper he had been victimized to please somebody—prudently antedating Toya's breach of promise, Jim North had flown to his city editor. The indignant two had sought the managing editor, the militant three had found the owner, and the furious four had called upon the judge who was to set Arcy's bail on the following morning. It happened to be a judge who was well aware of the Bluebeard chamber in the District Attorney's edifice of apparent rectitude, and, as that person had once declined—seeing no gain—to soften the prosecution of a friend of the judge's friend's friend, that dignitary now saw the chance of having that chamber unlocked. But they were of the same party, and even if the unlocking were done by him, he must still keep the secret for the party's sake. So, instead of assuring the furious four that the evidence

against Arcy would be found insufficient to hold him, he suggested that, if he held him on small bail, Mr. MacThyndall could take his trip to Europe and help represent his paper in Paris, as had been arranged—"skipping" his bail if necessary; while the newspaper's lawyers investigated his case and found the Bluebeard chamber. Which suited the irate newspaper owner well enough; this same District Attorney had not shown sufficient gratitude for the journalistic assistance that had elected him.

Thus it was, to the extreme indignation of the District Attorney—for his assistant detailed on the case had done all possible to impress the judge that now was the time to show the lawless that the new law about weapons was going to be enforced—Arcy was freed at so small an expense to his bondsman that one would have supposed the new law was not yet in force. But when he heard who the bondsman was, and that Robert C. MacThyndall was the R. C. MacT. whose initials met his eye each morning at the breakfast table—true Arcy had given his occupation as "newspaper man" but that was a favorite evasion of the sons of Subterranea—the District Attorney's wrath against Mr. J. Tubman Leeminster was terrible to behold; that gentleman, hastily summoned, having arrived, he was restrained from doing him an injury only by the fact that Leeminster was the larger of the two.

"A fine trick you've played on me," he whispered shrilly, in the accents of a scream. "Why didn't you tell me that fellow was a reporter? You let me think he was a grafter—"

"So he was," said Leeminster: "I don't care if he was a reporter or not. . . ."

"You don't care?" bellowed the District Attorney. "Why, I'd sooner arrest a Fourteenth Street politician than a reporter on the *Argus*. Scarthwaite'll never let up on me now; and when he starts for anybody, they're gone. He just hounds you and hounds you and hounds you. I've got to live like a Trappist monk or get out. You've ruined me, Tubby Leeminster."

So it proved. A year later there was a new District Attorney: Leeminster's friend was not even nominated.

X

THAT year was spent both profitably and pleasantly by Mr. and Mrs. R. C. MacThyndall—married since Arcy, by the great luck of Toya knowing the girl from a former show, got the full details of her suicide,

which involved the heir of one of America's large fortunes. His wife had long known of his *liaison* but had permitted it because she was freer married than divorced. But the man had left the former showgirl to follow another woman of fashion, and, this being one of the few cases where the girl really cared for the man, not the money, Toya's friend took poison. But, before doing so, she had seen Toya in Paris and had told of this intention should Arthur refuse to return from St. Moritz to their London apartment; and, when the news of her death came, Arcy gave his chief a story to cable that with its developments held the front pages of the New York newspapers for a week or more; forcing the wife to institute divorce proceedings, the correspondent the woman for whom Arthur deserted Toya's friend. All of which belongs to another history which shall some day be related.

Arcy had learned sufficient of the world not to tell of the lucky chance which had given him the details in a lace napkin. He invented, instead, a series of imaginary sleuthings which redounded to his resourcefulness; and the Paris correspondent had urged earnestly that Mr. Scarthwaite increase Arcy's honorarium. Which was not needed when the proprietor of the *Argus* heard it was the younger man who had given the paper the "exclusive" which had made all the other Manhattan dailies hold their injured noses.

Then it was that Arcy had yielded to the oft repeated request of Toya that their union be legitimatized. He had held off, hitherto, for a reason that, strangely enough, was an unselfish one. When first he had met Toya, she was the usual loud-voiced, ignorant chorus girl, considering herself, with neither birth, breeding nor any save a rudimentary education, the equal of all, the superior of most; brought to this pert and egotistical belief by a false system of public school training, plus the attention and compliments every pretty, youthful girl receives from stage door hangers-on. Meeting men with famous names and finding them bores or beasts, it is not strange such girls should fail to believe in a superior class.

Arcy had changed all that: since she loved him, she feared him and respected his attainments; was desirous of awakening in him more than the cool, kind affection which was all he gave her—openly. She had set herself to win his admiration, to make herself all he seemed to think a woman should be. Otherwise, she would have dropped Lee-minster immediately; but she needed money for her music, her education generally. Moreover, she wished to dress as did those Fifth Avenue

women whose *chic*, until then, she had not found so evident as that of her sister showgirls; and to save, after the thrifty Slavonic fashion, for summers of no work and many rehearsals. Then, gradually, through his constant mockery of her favorite fiction, she developed a taste for good literature; which, abetted by professional matinees at the better class theaters where she saw English comedies acted by actors familiar with the usages of drawing rooms, gave her knowledge of a class apart from the noisy spectacular brass band set whose escapades and scandal fill the Sunday supplements; a class impossible to respect and easy to emulate in dress and manners, which, unfortunately, with Toya as with so many American girls of the working classes, is the only aristocracy they know.

But, since Toya had learned that there were people not distinguished as to wealth nor willing to sacrifice honor to achieve it—people familiar with the best in books, art and music, she had set up an ideal, and, though she had been slow to achieve it while she remained in New York, she needed only removal from the tawdry life she must lead in dressing rooms and restaurants to begin in earnest. Add to that Paris, the example of fellow students better educated, of better families than her own, the respect, almost veneration, for art and literature that exists in Paris even among the lower classes, and the society of Arcy's new friends, painters, authors, correspondents and the like, who wasted no time on banalities—and Toya within was soon almost worthy of Toya without. And as she had all the dark mysterious beauty of the Slavs, whose women's eyes are starry and mysterious even when they are thinking of what they will have for dinner; yet was without the Slavonic clumsiness of body, having had a mother of the Czechs, whose grace of motion make their national dances too difficult for any but themselves—to say her mental attainments could ever come within speaking distance of her physical charms would be possible only to one of those who write bonbon fiction or "primitive" plays: in which total changes of character are accomplished between acts and in single chapters.

Say, rather, they came within shouting distance, megaphone distance; which was quite sufficient for so pretty a girl. At all events, she had learned to know good art and good manners if not to like them; and Arcy having selected her clothes for so long, she had developed a secondary instinct as to what suited her type; and now, in a plain, closely fitting skirt cut like a sword scabbard, with a narrow-should-

dered coat, long-lined in the back and sharply curved and cut away at the waistline, displaying her narrow waist and rounded torso in a tightly fitting semi-waistcoat of brocaded stuff, a long jabot of the softest and most expensive lace falling over it, she looked like the lady of a seventeenth century Royal Hunt; so aristocratically slender that she seemed tall, her small Greek-featured face like a vivid little flower on a long, graceful stem. It is a trick few women learn: to disregard entirely what are called the fashions, to find a style suited to their type, thereafter adhering to it. It is the device that distinguishes the successful beauty from the merely beautiful one—and is the only thing known to stir Paris, familiar to contempt with the picked beauties of the world who come to sell their charms in the highest market.

In Paris, then, wherever Toya went, she was followed by admiring, eager eyes. A Russian grand duke had his secretary seek her out to ask for an introduction. An English peer with a famous racing stable named for her a horse that was to win the Grand Prize. She did not dare walk alone on the Rivoli, the Paix, or any principal street: someone was sure to stop his motor and come to walk by her. Here a beautiful woman does not need to be on the stage to attract widespread attention: she has only to be where news is known before it reaches the newspapers—at race courses, restaurants and *revues*; to all of which Arcy's occupation as correspondent took him, and where he soon became famous—for the constant cavalier of a beauty is a man of no small importance in the gay world of Paris. Toya's beauty was better than all his letters of introduction. Without the slightest effort, he met all the grandees whom to know is to know the news before it is printed. The official correspondent of his paper had never enjoyed such intimacy with the famous and the wealthy. As it was soon found that Toya was not allowed to come without him, Arcy was invited to many suppers, shootings, coaching parties and other *divertissements* of English dukes, American millionaires, South American and Russian nabobs. So that Toya had not to argue, as in the past, when she brought up the marriage question. After his increase in salary, she had only to suggest.

Then, as delighted with her new dignity as a kitten with a new bow of ribbon, Toya no longer felt it a necessity to be present at every race meeting. She was seen seldomer in the Café de Paris and more often at symphony concerts and Wagnerian performances; and her teachers at the Conservatoire noted an increased progress in her studies. Being now assured that the man she wanted was tied to her securely unless she

herself willed it otherwise, the question of sex was settled in her mind, and she no longer found it necessary to remind him continually, by making fresh conquests, of her desirability in other men's eyes. And, as ever since they had left America he had forbidden her to accept any presents but flowers, candy or books, she could see no further use in submitting to that boredom that came from their compliments and lovemaking. She now concentrated upon her career with all the extra energy hitherto expended in flirtation; and the only men she allowed to escort her were Arcy's friends and those who were interested in civilized conversation—one of whom had been for some little while that eminent financier, Carolus Lang, temporarily master of his health and an occasional visitor to Paris.

Originally she had been directed by Arcy to use all her powers to persuade some friend of Lang's to introduce her to him upon one of those flying trips; and, once met, to exert herself to the utmost to gain his friendship and confidence—all for a reason with which Toya more than sympathized: vengeance for the treachery of Milton Lazard.

XI

Of Carolus Lang this history is too confined to treat with that detail due his remarkable character. There has been one who has filled near upon half a thousand such pages as this, yet got no farther than the fourth decade of Lang's life. To bring him past the sixth, when he comes into this tale, would require many thousand more: even to picture him adequately, transferring to paper that sense of power which he radiated, conveying that commingling of rapacity and philanthropy, scorn of the public yet desire for applause, hatred of sham yet love of intrigue, militant money making yet a devotion to all that is best in the arts and sciences so absorbing that he desired to share it with all the world and propagate it for posterity—all this would necessitate a lapse so long that interest would be lost in those minor persons who are our major ones.

Arcy had watched the reports of his health like a loyal subject the bulletins of the physicians attending a dying monarch: that is, since receiving the result of the investigation of Scarthwaite, owner of the *Argus*, which had resulted in the inclusion of Milton Lazard's name. Well for Leeminster had his haste not deprived that *commissionaire* of his commission. Arcy had given them the Leeminster clue, and it had been an easy task to ascertain his habits and to trace him on the night previous to Arcy's arrest.

Had the club porter requisitioned Leeminster's cab, the incident of Lazard's call might have been confused with the hundred other calls of non-members upon members that make up part of any *commissionaire's* average week. But the fact of Leeminster brushing that porter and his legitimate commission aside to enter deliberately the cab of a notorious nighthawk, had limned every detail of the *rencontre* in the non-fading colors of indignation upon the disappointed porter's mind. He remembered Lazard's name, Leeminster's order that the caller be sent to that private cardroom reserved for confidential communications, the exact duration of that particular one—everything necessary to confirm Arcy's suspicion that Lazard had been the instigator of the law's assault upon him.

And for this malignant treachery Lazard was going to pay dearly; that Arcy swore: Toya also. Her hatred for the man turned her into a little fury whenever his name was mentioned. Alone, she had been impotent: now that Arcy hated him, too, so confident was she in her chosen one, Lazard should bitterly regret each separate insult about the size of Miss Thiodolf's feet. She had never been conscious of this failing until he had loudly proclaimed it. Now she was forever conscious of it, and spent much time devising boots and pumps not so short-vamped as to be chorus-girly, yet that reduced the size of the extremities they covered to the perfection of other parts of her body. And, whenever the newest device hurt her, which was often, she thought vengefully of her lost comfort and peace of mind; and, if the requital of Lazard's treachery slumbered in Arcy, she awoke it. Next to their future, this was their absorbing topic. Ways and means suggested themselves; from such a primitive plan as having Lazard set upon by Chatham Square Apaches and beaten out of all recognition (Toya's) to the Machiavellian methods of Arcy, too artistic to succeed anywhere except inside book covers. Even those nights when some success should have made them serenely happy were spoiled by thoughts of a swaggering blackguard still reigning over his table at Noel's, making ragtime entertainers secondary attractions, continuing to be quoted in theatrical sheets for witty sayings or doughty lies about past adventures. At such mental pictures, Arcy would champ his teeth and kick at the bedcovers: his future would be forgotten. ~~genuine~~ genuine hatred is like a great mosquito forever buzzing about the ears; until it is slain, it is a wholesale poisoner of days and nights—even of purple ones. Nights especially; for like Macbeth it murders sleep.

During the early days of their exile, Carolus Lang had remained very low. The physicians of a king and an emperor were at the small villa at Villefranche into which Lang had been carried when he was stricken, and which his secretary, Corrie, had hastily hired, paying an extravagant price to get its occupants to go elsewhere. About this time an opera singer just arrived from America told Arcy that Lazard was wearing a magnificent stickpin, a miniature of Joardin's great statue "Io," created by the sculptor himself for the great financier, his earliest patron—a historic thing because it was the only one Joardin ever did. Carolus Lang must be very near his end: even his scatter-brained wife would not dare make such a gift unless he were; and Lazard must have inspired more than ordinary affection for her to take so great a chance. . . . Arcy's violent comments caused the songstress much amusement.

"How *can* he marry her? He's got a wife in Salt Lake City. I'm from there myself: started in the same show with her when she was a big favorite. All of us went to the wedding: we all thought she was marrying some millionaire. He talked so big we imagined he was backing the show. But one night we heard them quarreling in the dressing room. He was going to leave her unless she handed him her pay envelope—she mustn't even break the seal. . . . I'd like to see the man who'd dare say a thing like that to *me*," she concluded, unconsciously repeating what every woman believes until she is unlucky enough to meet a Lazard and does precisely what she has despised in others.

After Arcy left her, his jubilation faded. Whether Lazard married Mrs. Lang or not, he would have the handling of the Lang millions. Her husband must be warned in time. . . . Arcy hurried home to pack a bag, and catch the Côte d'Azur express to the Riviera. But Toya had news, too: an aviating Brazilian just returned from hydroplane feats off Villefranche had come over to her table at the Volney while she was taking tea; Lang had been seen wheeled about in an invalid chair. If he was out again, the warning could wait. But Lazard's wife?

"Maybe she's dead now, or divorced," suggested Toya ruefully.

"Divorced," nodded Arcy; "he'd surely divorce her, knowing his chances with Mrs. Lang for months." Then, with that genius for deduction that is a concomitant of hatred: "Buy her off—maybe that's what he wanted the thousand for."

"It *is*," said Toya, clapping her hands. "It *is*. But he didn't *get* it. Who'd lend *him* a thousand?"

"If Mrs. Lang's letting him wear that stickpin, fiscal questions aren't

bothering him just now. We've got to find out. I'll send a cheque to Bill Byrd and cable to have his Salt Lake agency look into this. Those Byrd men come high but they deliver the goods."

No proof of Toya's hatred for Lazard could have been stronger than that disclosed by the scene that followed; when she wept for anger because Arcy would not permit her to use a part of Leeminster's ten thousand even to share in the cost of this investigation. But Arcy was wise. They were not married at that time, and he had heard of separations before when the woman spoke loudly of benefits conferred upon the former loved one. And to be identified, even by exaggerated accusation, with the practices of a man he loathed so much, should never be. None of that shaking of the Leeminster plumtree should be utilized for anything except Toya's own luxuries and necessities: not even for anything in which he shared, even to the slightest degree.

In due time the first Byrd report arrived. The Salt Lake agent had referred the search for Mrs. Lazard to the San Francisco branch. Arcy was now advised that she was singing in the Bellefont Theater, "with illustrated slides." Later, a second report told of her hegira to Reno; and the Reno branch informed him of the hiring of one of those tiny single-story four-roomed bungalows on the outskirts of the Nevada capital; of the filing of an intention to become a resident—after the manner of all desiring a divorce. Such actions foretold a residence of some months at least. . . . "She was poverty-stricken in San Francisco. He distinctly says here that she isn't singing in any of the Reno 'honkatonks.' Someone's supplying the funds," said Arcy.

"There's only one thing I can't understand," Toya said, puzzled. "How is it that Lazard has so much money to spend? It isn't like him when he could give her all the evidence she needs to get the divorce right away—on the usual grounds. There's Lily and the girls Lily don't know about."

"It only proves he's given up trying to get money from anybody else and has gone straight to Mrs. Lang," elucidated Arcy, after some study. "Catch him acknowledging about Lily to *her*; even to fake up evidence! Women are suspicious enough anyway"—she gave a little interrupting sniff—"but old women must be the very devil."

With the news of Lang's increasing good health (telegraphed each day in the Monte Carlo correspondent's news-letter) added to this enforced hiatus at Reno, they could wait. Later, when Lang came to Paris, Toya was introduced the following day; on his next visit, a

month later, he dined with them in their little apartment off the Madeleine, Arcy duplicating, if not adding to, the good impression Toya had made. Both received an invitation to Lang's chateau at Cannes, in which he was again in residence. But it was not until their visit there that Arcy felt the auspicious moment for confidences had come. And then he did not make the mistake of endeavoring to hood-wink one so astute by pretending solicitude that was purely unselfish. He gave Lang the history of Toya's dealing with Leeminster and his own tolerance of the parasite. . . . "And isn't that all the more reason?" he finished in a fine frenzy of indignation.

Carolus Lang looked amused but in an ugly fashion. Arcy had known of Lang's long separation from his wife; but he nor anyone had an idea of the intense hatred in which the man held her. Her sins he could have pardoned; he had been as unfaithful as she. But she had made him ridiculous by her choice of rivals. Many had wondered why he had not divorced her. Arcy was the first to learn. For Lang began to explain, in a tired way as though relating a commonplace incident that bored him—

XII

"I like you, MacThyndall. But I'm not trusting you on that account, but because you won't speak of it for fear of your enemy not getting his deserts. I knew all you've told me months ago. I want that precious pair to hope so that their disappointment will hurt all the more. One of my attorneys saw Mrs. Lazard a week after she came to Reno. She's been getting a good fat substantial sum every week, and will continue to get it so long as she keeps her husband's name—"

He paused to indulge in a satisfied smile, "She's been told to stay in Reno and take *their* money, too. How about that, my young friend?" Arcy nodded, too amazed to be exultant. "But," Lang continued, his face clouding, "that won't prevent him from—Wait," he broke off. "Since you hate him so much, you may be able to think of something I haven't. Ten years ago, even ten months, it would have been easy for me. But this damned affliction of mine has thrown me out of gear. When a man never knows, any time he goes for a walk, whether he'll return alive or drop dead at the first corner, his mind gets atrophied. . . . I'll show you a copy of my will."

He took it from a pigeonhole in a marquetry desk, an inlaid trifle that had once adorned a palace and was listed in collector's manuals

at the price of a small competence. Arcy read amazed: To his . . . "beloved wife, Louisa Marie Lang" . . . after certain legacies to friends and servants had been deducted, he bequeathed the . . . "income on his entire estate for life." . . . The younger man repeated this incredulously.

Lang nodded. "And if you can give me some certain way of making her accept it, I'll have a codicil added in your favor. . . ."

Seeing that Arcy was still bewildered, Lang explained; some color came to his cheeks and a sparkle to his eye as he outlined his cherished plans. His money was to be at interest for a certain number of years until, by that weird accumulation known as compound interest, it doubled: then it was to be spent in establishing three institutions for the arts and sciences. Any man or boy of a high degree of intellect who would sign a contract to remain afterward on post-graduate work for five years would be educated free and paid a wage while doing so—these to assist in the work that would be done by the masters of science, who would be induced to come there by providing the colleges with all in the way of instruments, machinery and money that would carry their researches to fruition. One college was to be in America, another in France, a third in Germany; and thereafter, they would be identified with the greatest discoveries for the perpetuation, saving and ameliorating of human life. Nowadays most great scientists were forced to accept funds of self-seeking capitalists, who grew rich over the result of their discoveries. That would no longer be necessary when the Lang colleges flourished: their discoveries would be for the benefit of the world at large. While, as for the arts, any youth or girl with a decided talent for music, painting, sculpture or literature would also receive his education gratis, along with a small income. . . . Arcy stuttered, mumbled, flushed crimson, trying to find words to express his admiration of so great a humanitarian scheme.

Lang smiled wryly. "One must be either a sheep or a wolf in this world," he said gruffly. "I got tired of being a sheep, so I started to be a wolf. I made the mistake of robbing the rich, though, and they put me in jail as a low person; so when I got out I turned respectable and robbed the poor. I flatter myself, though, that this way I'm doing more good than if they'd spent it themselves. Their grandchildren ought to thank God I *did* rob them." He paused. "However, to do this, I need what I've got. I can't afford to give one-third to have a feather-brained peahen hand it over to a ridiculous peacock."

"One-third—why?" queried Arcy, more puzzled than ever.

"Her dower right: that's the law. Every married woman can get one-third of her husband's entire estate if he dies without making a will. Or she can break any will that leaves her less than that. If she could have divorced me she'd have got that, at least: she couldn't for the same reason I couldn't divorce her: we cancelled out. But if she accepts the will as I've made it—" Once more the ugly smile.

Arcy did some calculating. "But according to your own statement the income from the estate if left at interest will double it in a certain number of years."

Lang nodded, still smiling. "The executors of the will are scientific gentlemen who want the colleges," he said, "along with my personal friend and lawyer who's with me heart and soul. My dearly beloved little peahen can't survive me more than ten years the way she's going on. And, when she accepts the will, the executors are instructed to sell the larger part of my holdings and invest in certain safe propositions that won't pay any dividends for anything up to a decade—the new Argentine Railway for instance, that afterward will pay the holders of first mortgages something like thirty per cent on their investment; the Philippines and Hawaiian Trolley Company's another; the new Shantung Railroad—so forth and so on—you may be sure I've studied it out pretty carefully. But don't try to take these things for tips: a hundred thousand is the least such ventures accept: such things aren't open to the small investor—don't need to be. . . . Now do you understand?"

His smile chilled Arcy: it was some time before he stammered out that he did. "You mean her income will be entirely in the hands of the executors—they can make it as little as they choose."

"Which means all the more toward the Big Scheme—precisely," returned Lang. "But being a mental light-weight, the peahen would not observe any such possibility. She'd only understand that, if she took her dower right, she'd get one-third as much income. But Lazard would alter all that. He'd want something she could settle on him—and you can't settle annuities. Unless I'm very wrong, his idea is to get possession of her property while she's in love with him, then quit. And, my way, she has *no* property. So even if he didn't suspect a trick—which he's likely to, knowing how I despise her—he'd insist on the dower right. Think as much as I will," Lang added wearily, "I can't see any way to prevent him. If he had a criminal record, if he'd done

something the law could hold him for—but he's taken as good care of his skin as an old maid. And that's why I say, if you can tell me some way to make her accept that will, down goes your name in it for a good round sum. Think it over," he added, and pulled a long bellcord, the old-fashioned chateau way of summoning servants; one of whom, answering, was directed to serve a hot bedtime drink useful for promoting slumber.

But it did not accomplish its purpose with Arcy. He lay awake until dawn endeavoring to discover the last link in the chain that was forging for his enemy. But nothing practicable suggested itself until the following morning when, sipping his chocolate in bed, his eyes remained riveted upon a blue envelope with a white address pasted thereon—the European form of telegram. Then, without the slightest effort, there was suggested that for which he had vainly racked his brain.

He leaped up, threw a dressing gown over his pajamas, thrust his feet into Japanese slippers and hurried down the chateau's cold halls to where Carolus Lang still lay abed. "I've got it!" Arcy almost shouted. Rapidly he outlined what the sight of the telegram envelope had suggested: "That is, if the present Mrs. Lazard dislikes her husband nearly as much as we do."

"Set your mind at rest there," returned Lang, his state of excitement one to cause the royal physicians grave concern. "She does."

"Then it's as good as done," said Arcy jubilantly. And Carolus Lang agreed that it was.

XIII

Seven months later Milton Lazard awoke one morning in the Madison Avenue mansion of the late Carolus Lang and reached out his hand mechanically (as he had done so many mornings) for his little sack of near-alfalfa and brown cigarette papers. Despite the expertness of many years, half the tobacco spilled, the other half was blown upward into his eyes; for, as he leaned over to wet the paper with his tongue, a tremendous yawn split his face in two, tears came into his eyes, his body was shaken by a hundred heaves, his mouth twitched abominably and, altogether, he seemed in a paroxysm of pain. The cigarette paper dropped from his fingers; he fell back on his pillow.

Several times he essayed to raise himself and reach beneath the bolster; but it was not until the third time that he succeeded, drawing out

a long, thin case encircled by a rubber band which held a spoon. This latter he hastily dipped into the water glass on the carved cabinet that served as a night table; on which was also a cunning device of a great silversmith, a tiny silver figurine representing a Crusader in full armor, naked blade in hand, lance couched at an imaginary Saracen. Lazard pulled at the lancehead, which fell off and dangled by a tiny silver chain, while a flame of ignited alcohol shot from the lance. Over this Lazard held his spoon until the water bubbled and boiled; upon which he filled with it a small syringe he had taken from the case. Into this, removing the piston rod while the water boiled, he dropped four little white pellets. The water drawn in, these dissolved. Screwing on a needle so tiny as to seem but a point of light, he carefully examined his forearm, and finding a place where neither veins nor arteries interfered, he injected into his listless blood the contents of the syringe; then lay back, with his eyes closed, his features relaxed, while the drug coursed madly through his system. A foolish smile came to his face: he stretched out his limbs in an ecstasy of enjoyment, laughing aloud as the pleasant things he might do that day occurred to him. Faster than the fastest moving picture cyclodrama, he had visions of an 80-90 H. P. car shooting through the greenwood; the water of the Hudson cleaved before the swiftly moving prow of one of the fastest speed boats on the river; all the pretty girls of the Casino show looked admiringly toward the box where he sat with his new and wealthy wife.

He opened his eyes, enjoying the realization of the present now the necessity for the morphine—to which he had had recourse months before that he might maintain the wit necessary to win his new wife—had been satisfied. Now he rolled his brown paper cigarette with ease, as he lay there in a bed which had once been a king's: a masterpiece of Florentine bronze, covered with representations of pornographic mythology—Leda and the swan, Jupiter wooing Danaë, Venus and Adonis, Diana and her huntmaids in the brook, a rash boy peering through the reeds—many more such incidents on which a certain decadent monarch had desired to look and look again. This royal couch had been purchased for half a million francs. And a plebeian adventurer now lay upon it smoking cigarettes twenty of which did not cost a penny!

Presently he reached up and pressed one of a row of enameled buttons imbedded in an embossed globe that swung from the head of the bed. A servant appeared with coffee and fruit: another laid out Lazard's

linen and clothes, summoning a third who determined to a nicety the temperature of the parasite's bath and, first sweating him, punched and pummelled his face and body into an appearance of health and strength. Emerging in a dressing gown La Pompadour or DuBarry might have envied, Lazard permitted a dapper and impeccably attired young gentleman—who had been waiting for the past hour—to kneel and take measurements, another dapper and impeccably attired young gentleman writing them down.

"You wish us to attend to choosing the cloth? Yes, sir. We will see no one has any of the same pattern as any of yours. Shall we say a dozen lounging suits, three morning coats, one black, with pin stripe black trousers, one gray, one fawn-colored, each with self-trousers; smoking suits (by which he meant dinner jacket), one double-breasted, one single; riding suit, knickerbocker suit—and I should advise Bedford cords, also, sir; they're very smart. (Bedford cords also, Mr. Mink.) Then a house suit braided, with scarlet facings"—the young man seemed to go into an ecstasy. "And now as for fancy waistcoats . . ."

But we need follow this young gentleman no further. When his business was concluded, the valet brought Mr. Lazard's mail in a huge basket; the tradesmen and the begging letter writers, the secretaries of charities and a majority of those to whom Lazard had ever addressed a single word, all had been busy. He shook his head. "Later," he said; "and I can't see anybody else this morning, Wilkins, even if I *did* make appointments."

"No, sir; certainly not. Very good; thank you, sir," returned Wilkins mechanically. He had trained himself to be an automaton during working hours—although, for many years, he had ruffled it along Broadway of nights, knew Lazard's record and despised him.

"And I'm not to be disturbed by anybody, either," continued Lazard, enjoying his new importance immensely. "I shall be in consultation with Mrs. Lazard and with my attorneys and her attorneys and the late Mr. Lang's attorneys. The will's to be read today. Although, of course, *we* know its contents, naturally. Mrs. Lang knew the day the old gentleman died. He must have gone loony if he imagined anybody with a dome not pure concrete would stand for such foolishness; and I'm going to tell his lawyers so, too."

"And a lot they'll care what you tell 'em," thought Wilkins; but aloud he replied sympathetically: "Quite so, sir. I should if I were you, sir. They want taking down a bit, those lawyer fellows: thieves I call 'em, sir."

Lazard nodded his head lordlily. "As full of larceny as Sing Sing," he agreed. "If you locked them up, you could turn everybody in the jails loose. They're just as harmless as a nest of baby adders. Guess they didn't reckon on having a man to deal with, or they wouldn't try to put over a raw one like this will. But they insist on a formal reading and explanation, so here goes another morning to hell and gone." He sighed wearily: Wilkins was to imagine that every moment of his master's day was as precious as rubies.

Below in the great Lang library—hung in Imperial purple, the eagles stamped and emblazoned on draperies, upholstery and on the bindings of the handsome hand-tooled purple volumes, with Empire medallions and bronze carvings on table legs, mantels, chairs, *chaises-longues*, with the many Tanagra figurines enclosed in glass and Lang's curio cases of Napoleonic relics set into the tops of slim, straight-legged mahogany tables—sat every known species of legal sharp. There was snowy-haired Judge Cheyney (formerly of Fai'fax Co't House, suh) but for many years senior partner of Cheyney, Cholmondeley, Isaacs, McGinnis and Salvini—a firm which united all suffrages by having a representative of every prominent race that made up New York's diverse population. Sir Jameson Cholmondeley was of the recognized King's Counsel type: he looked half dressed without his snowy peruke and official robes; he had come posthaste from England—where he represented the British end of the firm—to be present at the will reading. Isaacs was a type of highly educated Jew: he had the face of an artist, save for eyes like a shrewd peddler. McGinnis was a good-natured Tammany type, Salvini, who also conducted a bank for Neapolitans and Sicilians, a florid Italian political type.

Then there were Lazard's lawyers, redolent of Broadway flash and brash: a young Jew who wore patent leather shoes with a lounge suit and a mathematically exact double rhomboid of a four-in-hand secured by a large solitaire, his companion the sort of American who hates foreign countries where a willingness to buy endless drinks does not admit one to the confidence of strangers or put an obligation on acquaintances to lend him money: who noisily applauds flag waving songs and insists the eagle is more than a match for any foreign foe, but who resents extra taxes for armaments and who never enlists in time of war. This person had already said something excruciatingly funny concerning the King's Counsel's habit of carrying his handkerchief in a cuff instead of in a hip pocket: having yet to learn that this latter medium did not exist in smartly cut garments.

Mrs. Lazard's lawyers sat with these latter ornaments to the bar: colorless persons not to be distinguished from thousands of others who wear secret order insignia in their lapels or as watch charms; a couple as characterless as a glass of water: "pillars of society." They had been endeavoring, for some days, to convince themselves that it showed a proper respect for the deceased when their client remarried within a week; for they earnestly assured the public that they undertook no cases they did not believe beyond reproach. Having succeeded (as usual) in taming their boasted unruliness of conscience, they, like good Christian men, were now glaring at the ruffianly executors—certain staid gentlemen of vast scientific attainments who, with the former Fai'fax Co't House judge, were plotting some villainy to mulct their estimable worthy client, a woman whose character was beyond the reproach of any save rogues.

But skilled in self-deception though they were, the sight of Milton Lazard—in a suit of brown that verged upon wine color, and a flaming striped necktie, his absurdly small feet advertised by buttoned tan shoes with vivid cloth tops, his eyes greedy, his heavy brutal chin flattened over his high collar—gave them uneasy qualms; qualms that were increased by her own attire as she flaunted in on his arm. Her dress was black, to be sure, but so coquettishly cut, so scanty of skirt and tight of waist—"à la princesse"—that it resembled a stage costume more than a widow's grief, especially when allied to a coiffure of piled-up puffs, elaborately waved, and a face enameled so rigidly it seemed to creak when she spoke. If she had laughed, the whole pitiable mass might have crumbled away like wet plaster on an old ceiling. Small of figure and of features, she might have passed at a distance for a costly coryphee; near, she was a mere exhibit of upholstery and kalsomining, of small charms long deceased and denied decent burial.

But she bore herself with the air of a spoiled and petted beauty: too many youths had been dependent upon her for theaters, restaurants, motor rides, gold cigarette cases and silken haberdashery to deny her that admiration as necessary to her as air. To her lawyers and Lazard's she now endeavored to convey the impression of a helpless girl relying on manly chivalry. The Lang henchmen she aimed to impress as one injured, insulted and irate, yet in her gentle goodness willing to forgive and be friends.

Lazard thinned his lips at this, indicating immense reserve forces, warning one and all that here at least was a mighty fellow grimly

determined that justice should be done, able to enforce it, too: reticent and repressed now, but let all who would attempt chicanery 'ware his wrath. Which caused her lawyers to assume an air of virtue, his of outraged American independence; but which went entirely unnoticed by the callous ruffian band, who seemed as contented as pussy cats purring in anticipation of a breakfast of rich cream—all of which endured for the reading of the early portions of the will.

These dealt with pictures and curios bequeathed to societies, clubs and museums; legacies and minor bequests to friends and servants. Once only did Lazard lose his pose: imagining he had heard mentioned as one of the former a certain Robert C. MacThyndall; and for the moment he suspected something sinister in the quiet, assured air of the executor who read. There was too much calm about his companions' countenances, too. But Judge Cheyney's soft Southern intonations had slurred over Arcy's name; and Lazard assured himself he had not heard aright. How might the great Carolus Lang come to such intimacy with an obscure reporter; and in so short a time? . . . Righteous wrath soon replaced the momentary fear when Judge Cheyney came to the section bequeathing "to my beloved wife, Louisa Marie Lang, the interest upon my entire estate for life," a wrath that grew during what seemed an interminable recital of the aims and ambitions of the three colleges of "scientific research," etc. Several times his attorneys thought it part of their duty as legal advisers to lay restraining hands on his shoulders; delaying his fiery denunciation until Judge Cheyney wiped his tortoise shell spectacles, folded over the rustling pages of the heavily sealed document and smiled in a congratulatory manner upon the chief beneficiary; who, however, seemed as removed from gratitude as if the will had failed to mention her name.

Now she began to flutter in what, no doubt, she deemed an adorably helpless little way; her eyes beseeching her *generalissimo* and her two armies to defend her against a cruel and unexpected assault. It was the opportunity for which Lazard had been training all his life. He fired a preliminary gun in the shape of a portentous frown; and, as he rose, the enemy seemed to give him that grave attention due a foe worth considering.

"If Mrs. Lazard takes *my* advice," he began—and then the batteries of the enemy ceased immediately to be masked.

"You refuh to Mrs. *Lang*, suh?" inquired the ancient judge, a school-master to a schoolboy.

"*Lazard*," thundered the owner of that name, glaring about him in a manner meant to be tremendously annihilating.

Judge Cheyney shrugged his shoulders: the schoolmaster deploring the caning that the schoolboy seemed bent on making inevitable, yet which so offended the master's dignity that he sought a deputy; nodding to that member of the firm more accustomed to bellicose methods. McGinnis rose, his smile calculated to provoke further warfare. "Who?" he asked.

Lazard repeated the information in a louder tone. "And I'll ask you to remember it, too," he added, increasing the insult of his intonation.

"I was under the impression that Mrs. *Lazard* was in *Reno*," returned McGinnis blandly. "Only this morning we received a message from her there. I have it here. It occurred to me you might like to see it." The velvetness of his Irish voice was never more in evidence, as he tossed it across the long, low Empire center table.

But Lazard let it lie where it had fallen. "I'm not interested in *that* person," he rejoined stiffly: then lost all pretense at dignity as he added, choking: "You know well enough there is only one Mrs. Lazard as far as we are concerned."

"But you speak as though there were two," said McGinnis in blank astonishment.

Something in his look and the amusement of the other enemies caused Lazard to sense again that sinister something the name of MacThyn-dall had evoked. But, perceiving no tangible reason therefor, he decided it was but part of the usual stock-in-trade of lawyers—first alarm, then attack; and he made an angry and pointless reply.

His and hers were on their feet now. "I must demand that my client be treated with civility at least," said the hitherto passive owner of the patent leathers. "And I wish to remind you, gentlemen, that where you fail in respect to a lady, you may be within your legal rights, but you are not acting like gentlemen," put in one of the common-place men of the secret order insignia. "In plain words," added the other, "our client considers this inimical to her best interests and will take an appeal—eh, Mrs. Lazard?" On this the six of them had agreed, the widow-bride having bowed to the majority when the worst interpretation of her late husband's intentions had confirmed Lazard's denunciations. And, as now he was favoring her with a terrific scowl, she made haste to nod.

"But why, my dear sir?" asked the King's Counsel, though con-

sumed with curiosity and addressing McGinnis who, as spokesman, remained standing. "Why does everyone continue to address Mrs. Lang as Mrs. Lazard?"

McGinnis spread his palms. "I suppose I'll have to read the real Mrs. Lazard's telegram before they will believe it," he said; and reached across the table where the yellow slip still lay. "Kindly give me your attention, everyone:

"Night Letter.

"RENO, NEVADA, November 6th.

"Whoever sent a telegram stating I am divorced from my husband Milton Soulsbee Lazard lied and forged my name. Cannot believe any such telegram was ever sent unless someone did it as a joke. My husband and I are on the best of terms. He sends me money regularly, as records of National bank here will show. Perhaps my being in Reno gave rise to this rumor. Am here for my health, mountain air, doctor's orders. Will never divorce my dear husband."

"It is signed 'Minnie Lazard,' " added McGinnis, crossing and indicating the signature, while placing the telegram in the hands of Carolus Lang's widow. "'Minerva Mortimer' in parentheses. Stage name, I suppose. And now, Mrs. Lang, that you see how you have been victimized, it is up to you as to what you want us to do in this unpleasant matter. Shall we place the matter in the hands of the proper legal authorities? Or, to save you the unpleasant notoriety, the somewhat uncomfortable sensation of having the world know you have been the victim of a bigamist, we are willing to do what we can to assist *you* if you will assist *us* by signifying your acceptance of the will as executed, saving us the expense and trouble of any attempt to break it."

He paused, taking a deep and satisfied breath, totally disregarding the Lazard lawyers and those of Mrs. Lang, who were loud in accusations of blackmail and conspiracy. As for Lazard, who had been for a moment in a condition of shock, he had now regained his assurance and was proclaiming wildly that the telegram was a subterfuge.

"Don't you think we've got you for that little dodge?" he shouted, shaking his fist in McGinnis's face. "A trick to make her accept a double-crossing will. It must be pretty fishy if you have to stoop to a trick like that. I've got the telegram from Minnie, haven't I?" he

demanding of the now hysterical little woman. "I'll get it and show it to you again."

"The point is however," interrupted McGinnis pleasantly, "that Mrs. Lazard did not send it. As she suggests, it may have been sent as a joke—but the joke is on Mrs. Lang, and we don't care for that sort of joke—I beg your pardon, sir."

He addressed his apology to his senior, Sir Jameson Cholmondeley, K.C.B., who had risen, frowning.

"Gentlemen," he protested, in tones of insulted probity. "Gentlemen—" His attitude coupled with his formidable dignity denoted danger; even Lazard was silenced when the K.C. turned a chilly look toward him. "I have heard a firm with which I have been associated for nearly half a century accused of an attempt to commit a criminal act," continued Sir James. "Under the circumstances, I feel called upon to repeat my words of last night, and to demand instead of request that nothing be done which will render my colleagues accomplices in concealing a crime." He turned to the youngest member of the firm. "Telephone for an officer, Mr. Salvini," he directed. "Lay before the department the evidence of bigamy against this offensive person Lazard. Let his attorneys communicate with us in future by mail. We will have no more such disgraceful exhibitions. We do not care to hear any more from *you*, sir," he added pointedly, addressing the flag waver, the drink purchaser, who had been most aggressive in his charges of fraud.

There was instant silence; then Salvini's voice could be heard asking that the Chief of Detectives despatch with all speed two plain clothes men. It was evident that he then listened while that official asked for particulars to fill out a warrant. "The name is Milton Lazard, occupation unknown, age thirty-odd, native of Nebraska; the charge is—"

But Lazard had reached him ere now, had placed a nervous shaking hand over the telephone receiver. "Don't—don't!" he entreated. "You've got me, I guess. I'll do whatever you say"—as in another age the misshapen jester, his ancestor, had crouched on the cobbles of the courtyard and kissed his master's feet that the threatening lash might not descend upon him.

Salvini, somewhat disconcerted, beckoned McGinnis, who took his place: the great McGinnis, a power in police eyes, a politician who could with a nod destroy even detective chiefs.

"It's all right, my boy—McGinnis talking . . . yes, Aloysius P.

Hold the line a minute." He covered both receiver and transmitter, and turned. "You've got just one minute to decide in, Mr. Lazard," he said. "Leave this room and take your representatives with you, or leave it in custody. Hurry! I can't keep the chief waiting. He's apt to grow peevish—"

McGinnis grinned. Lazard turned to his lawyers: "It's a frame-up," he said sullenly.

McGinnis uncovered the transmitter. "Chief—" he began.

"Wait, wait," said Lazard, terror-stricken. "We're going—we're going. Come on, boys." And, herding his attorneys, who tried to detain him, he made an inglorious exist.

"Now, Mrs. Lang?" McGinnis used a gentler tone, but did not alter his position at the telephone; though the commonplace men were protesting that such actions were high-handed outrages that all present should bitterly repent.

"It's simply a question of whether you wish to be our friends or not," continued McGinnis calmly. "Yes, yes, Chief," he interpolated; "I ask you to wait, please. . . . Mrs. Lang, you see how impatient he is. . . . If you are going to accept this will, please sign the acceptance—Isaacs, please." His partner moved toward her, offering her his fountain pen, indicating the place of signature. "If you wish to cause us trouble and annoyance, take the advice of the bigamist who has deliberately deceived you." McGinnis could not make his usual gesture, for his hands were engaged: his face, however, was expressive.

"What would you do?" she shrilled in falsetto, fluttering in earnest this time.

"He will be arrested and undoubtedly sentenced, and the world will know how you have been victimized," put in the King's Counsel, interposing bluffly.

"Tut, tut, Suh Jameson," muttered Judge Cheyney. "An honored name? Nonsense, suh. Now if the will were unfair to you, dear lady. . . . But you keep youah house here, youah Newport villa, youah chateau at Cannes. Whereas, if you broke the will and secured youah dower, youah income would not permit such extravagances. This man Lazard wished the will broken so that he could lay his hands on ready money. . . ."

Again McGinnis quieted the unruly official at the other end of the wire—or seemed to do so. In face of both arguments, and despite the warnings of her counsel, she seized Isaacs's pen. "There." she said petulantly. And signed.

She could never be persuaded thereafter that Lazard was not in some way responsible for her future misfortunes. One by one, as the years passed and Lang's instructions were obeyed, she saw her houses go: first the Newport villa, then the Madison Avenue mansion, until she had only the Cannes chateau where, like her husband, she went to die. However, she lived longer than if she had had the entire income to lavish upon other young men, or her dower right to squander upon Lucullan luxury. By reducing her to fifty thousand a year the executors added an extra decade, which gave the good priests of Cannes the opportunity to frighten her into fear of a future state; causing the fatuous old sinner to imagine that at so advanced an hour she might cheat the devil of his due; and, once convinced that further dissipation would speedily end her days, she put in a belated bid for the least purchasable of all things—with the encouragement of the holy fathers. Sir Jameson Cholmondeley, believing in the efficacy of such repentances, overruled the *savant* executors, and at any rate the Rest House of St. Mary Sulpicia profited: a certain number of penniless people may always find bed and board there, thanks to her donation. Even she could not die without the world having benefited somewhat.

XIV

LAZARD left the house before an investigation of his luggage could be made. It was not until he again examined that luggage minutely, in the comparative safety of a steamer headed for a Latin-American city where he would be non-extraditable, that he discovered that in his valet, Wilkins, he had had the services of a brother craftsman; who, perverting the golden rule in his case as Lazard had done in the case of Lang, had removed many of the more important exhibits in the collection of stickpins, cuff links, jeweled waistcoat buttons and other *bijouterie* that Mrs. Lang had given the object of her admiration. So that all Lazard had to show for his residence in the Lang house was now worth but a few thousands. Thus, a few weeks later, a pitiful letter reached the Lang executors through Lazard's lawyers, and its contemptuous answer allowed him to return to a country where his gift of language might again earn him a livelihood. A bitter experience at the hands of the customs officials awaited him. Not having been abroad before, he had shown the remainder of the Lang jewelry to a female passenger he was endeavoring to impress, and, some of the cabin stewards being, as usual, customs spies, Lazard was disagreeably

surprised on landing by a request for its history. Not daring to give a real one, he must sell some gems to pay the duty: was thus mulcted of a large portion of all he had saved from the wreck of his high hopes.

A little later, as the news of his return spread along Broadway, Lily Lamotte's husband called upon him, administered a severe thrashing and a warning that, if he heard of any further reminiscences involving Lily's name, he would call again with a revolver. This man had known Lily when she was Lazard's appanage, had been deceived by her for him; but, despite this, had hurried to her at the first announcement of the second marriage of Mrs. Lang; having been as unable to conquer his passion as the average drunkard. Being a moody and morose person, with a superb chest development and a hard hitting record, he was quite able to gain for his wife the respect in which a man wishes his wife to be held. So that Lily Lamotte, nowadays, moves in one of the best *bourgeois* circles, and seems one of the most typical of her many female acquaintances therein. Lazard always looks the other way if by any chance they meet in public places.

He was even more of a hero to the new court he gathered about him than to the old; for, the true facts of the Lang catastrophe never even reaching the servants, he was free to interpret his ejection in his own way, and was pointed out as the man who, having won a fortune, deliberately abandoned it because his nature turned in disgust against rendering affection to a dyed and painted old woman. "I thought I could do it, but it would have been easier to make the Statue of Liberty do a turkey trot," he has said many thousand times. Which tale of temperament, added to the "fame" with which his supposed marriage had covered him, won him the affections of another Lily. On Broadway when nasty notorieties pack the theaters and capable histrions in craftsman-like plays can draw only average audiences, it does not matter how one becomes "famous" so long as it is accomplished.

Curiously enough, Lily the Second is evening the score for Lily the First and for all the others. Lazard, after winning her by indifference, has become violently infatuated, thus cooling her ardor; and is now retained only because he works harder in her service than would a press agent on a salary; so that for her vaudeville engagements the remuneration had been raised. Now, indeed, is there truth in his former statement that he receives only "half an orange in the morning and a sack of tobacco a week"; and some day, when her heart is touched anew, he will find himself in the position in which he has placed so many other

men. Then abandonment, and, as his formula for wit has become general along the Nightless Lane, and his girth and chins have increased during the years he has served the second Lily, she will have no successor; unless he should happen to find a fortune on the Broadway sidewalk—which, to say the least, is unlikely—and is willing to augment with it his failing fascinations. His future prospects are not such as to encourage any to follow in his path.

Not the least of his annoyances is the frequency with which names of Toya Thiodolf and Robert Cameron MacThyndall figure in theatrical announcements, publishers' lists and other forms of enviable publicity.

SUN MAGIC

by Thomas Moul

Where cradling leaves their green unfold,
The sun-king weaves a web of gold.
The sweet air swims with the bright shine
When his hand skims the bramble-twine
And the maiden-flush of flowering thorn,
And the silver bush so long forlorn
Of sleeping bud, and the windy flowers
Sprung in the sod since April showers.
His fingers speed o'er brake and hollow,
Which way they lead, the fresh winds follow.
And every branch, set swinging, herds
An avalanche of golden birds!

RUBIES IN CRYSTAL

by Grace H. Flandrau

I

THERE was something about his morning coat that was so intensely like him. She had not known anyone before she married, at least not well, who wore one. In Westport they mostly didn't.

When he asked her to marry him it was as unthinkable to her, as it would have been to Westport, that she should refuse. As soon refuse God, or George Washington if he should come back to earth. He was the wonder and admiration of the town. He was a diplomat and had known kings and queens. A real diplomat, not a bad political joke, and he had made elaborate studies in Paris when other boys as rich as he would have gone to the devil on Broadway.

But that was long before—long before he chose, whimsically, to spend a summer in the village of his birth. After years of disdain a Scarth had returned to Westport.

He brought servants and reopened the old house. He was all that Westport could have expected. He was grave and courtly, quiet and at the same time grand. His clothes partook of his incredible perfection. So did his morals, although it is possible that Westport, in extolling them, experienced a certain disappointment here. After all, a man who has lived so long in foreign cities—Westport, however, concealed its dissatisfaction and acclaimed the fact that he even went to church. Every Sunday his discreet bald spot reflected the ruby light of the Scarth memorial window from one corner of the Scarth pew, and his flawless morning coat exuded sanctity.

That he should have chosen Lily was, faintly, a second disappointment. When we create deities, we expect them to repay us with disdain. The least they can do is to despise us, else we are cheated of our reverence. Westport couldn't see why he had done it, with all his money and the kings and queens. Lily was nice enough, pretty in a simple Westport way, with yellow curls. But that was all. Lily sometimes wondered too, especially after they were married. It didn't even seem to be the yellow curls, at least not to any indecorous extent. Tilden was as decorous in pajamas as in a morning coat.

At any rate he did ask her to marry him. And when Lily gave her

gold head and twenty years into his exalted keeping the town certainly hoped she appreciated the honor done her.

II

THE legation windows were open, and floods and floods of gay, foreign sunshine poured into the high-ceilinged room. They were entertaining at luncheon for the new Italian. Tilden had been stepping about in his morning coat for an hour arranging the flowers and the place cards. He would know to the last subtle distinction where each guest should sit, rank upon rank. He went about his business, not breathing hard—Tilden never breathed hard—but with a consecrated earnestness. She thought she had never seen such clean fingernails, clean and white and even—of course he never committed the vulgarity of polishing them. He smelled faintly of toilet vinegar, he wore white gaiters and a white line around his waistcoat. His morning coat fitted beyond belief. He was really quite bald.

She stood looking down the table. Filet lace and a Dresden epergne with fruit and flowers. The Dresden piece only used in the daytime, silver at night. The bewildering sunshine caught and twinkling in the ruby red of the Bohemian wine glasses. Ruby red, ruby red light, glowing hotter than the ruby light through the Scarth memorial window. "In memoriam, Zachariah Phineas Scarth, Sarah Deborah Scarth"; then the Doxology, "Praise God from whom—" A smell of varnish and lilies, and pretty soon the Sunday gravy and sweet potatoes. Westport.

No, this was another ruby light, dancing in the wine glasses where it belonged. Ah, and the smell of mimosa flowers, sweet, sweet! On her right would sit Amioti, on her left the nice old Frenchman. Then Madame Cusac, then de Palma. Over there, Mme. de Palma, and next—next— Her heart did a giddy swerve. Something caught her breath. Intoxicating became the mimosa and the orange flower sweetness of the freesias blooming in the Dresden epergne. She was dizzy with the giddy, singing sunshine rioting in glass and silver.

She stepped through the French window onto a small balcony of graystone overlooking the street. An old woman passed with a basket of flowers strapped to her back, bright little bunches tied together in hard knots and a string of little dead birds over one arm.

"Niña, roses and beautiful gardenias—cheap, cheap! Or some little birds to breakfast on—Niña!"

The sky blue, a snowy breeze from the mountain, and the smell of sunshine on hot flowers. Presently, presently he would come, he would be there!

The sun shone straight on Tilden's bald spot, but not into his eyes. You couldn't imagine it shining into his eyes at a diplomatic luncheon. Or anything happening to him. About him all things would be perfect. He was talking gravely and pleasantly, leaning first to this side, then to that. Lily too was talking and laughing, not too much. He had told her to be restrained. But it was hard to be restrained today, knowing what she knew. Knowing the whole monstrous, gallant, shameless sweetness of what she knew. Hard to be restrained when she was drunk, drunk, drunk.

"What is it, eh, eh? What is it that's going on in that charming head?" squeaked old Piroigne, dean of the corps and soon to be retired. He quizzed her, looking into her eyes, taking advantage of his pose of old man. She knew that her eyes were too bright, too dazzling.

"Nothing, dear Baron, nothing."

"Nothing, eh? That's what women always say. I've seen it before in my life," he signed. "*Sacré tonnerre*, what a thing it is to get old! What a damnable thing!"

He turned away from her querulously. Poor old thing! Was it awful to get old? She didn't know. It had nothing to do with her.

III

THEY looked at each other but four times during lunch. Once when they sat down. How gay and caressing his eyes were, at once humble and daring. Again when the fish went out—ah, she had not eaten any of it! She could not eat food today. Then a non-committal glance over the *salade*. Why so non-committal? Had anything happened? Were things no longer as they had been? No, she had found his eyes again, just now. They were hungry, almost stern. She was comforted. Tilden was talking.

"No, just for a few days. We're leaving tomorrow. Goncourt thinks there may be some quail."

Tilden was going away. He was going off with three or four colleagues into the country. Had that been in the back of her mind all during luncheon? She wondered. She had not consciously thought of it. She was glad that *he* had heard it that way. She would have been ashamed to tell him outright. But why should he know? Why did she

wish him to know it? What did she want? She, the wife of Tilden Scarth, wife of the *chargé*. It was monstrous. She was a monstrous woman. What would all these so fine and proper people say if they had any idea.

But there had been really nothing, not so much as a word. Just the knowledge, pulsing back and forth between him and her like crackling, diabolical lightning.

IV

THEY took coffee on the inner balcony, hanging over the courtyard. A balcony smothered round with thick plants, shaded by a gay awning, red and white. It was cool in spite of the blazing sun. The fountain cooled it and that breeze from the hills. And as though the smell of the orange blossoms were not enough, a wanton, drooping, yellow, depraved mimosa set a trap for the very angels in Paradise with its enchanted fragrance.

In continental fashion the men joined the women for coffee. She poured it from the small silver coffee pot with the hot handle. Every little figure in the wrought silver stood out today, startlingly plain. It was as though she had never seen them before—sweet little figures, how sweet they were! Also the thick, brown coffee, strong and aromatic. Her hands trembled a little and the egg shell cups rattled on their saucers.

He was just inside the yellow salon talking to Piroigne. Short, straight nose and full lips. And he wasn't too big. His smile was caressing, even with Piroigne. Caressing eyes and smile—gay, debonair, intoxicating he was, like the county, like this life so undreamed of in Westport! Even Piroigne was captivated. She could see his hand on the young man's knee. She was jealous.

They had met only three times. Once at the opera. She had seen him across the foyer. He was looking at her. She knew he would come. He came swiftly and spoke to her hostess.

"This is Diego, Lily. Mrs. Scarth has heard the Ravallos speak," and so on.

He bowed low, appraising, adoring. In the instant of his greeting he seemed to observe, lovingly, all of her, her golden hair, her ankles, her smooth breast. Next at a tea. There were vague, breathless words on a sofa about—who knows what they were about? Nothing. His arm touched hers as they sat. Accidentally, of course. Of course if he had

known it he would have moved. If she had thought he knew it she would have moved. But she did not think so and she did not move. It was too sweet.

They talked and their words were like nothing or like some non-descript thing flung over a hot-bed under which little, fragrant plants were springing up quickly. The very next day she met him on the street. She had been sure when she went out she would meet him. A smile and a question in his eyes, something reverential and impudent, and he passed by, leaving her heart pounding hard thumps that jarred the back of her neck.

The luncheon today was an accident, a fated accident. Someone had failed at the last moment. Tilden said:

"I wonder who we can get, that is, whom. Awkward at the very last—"

She said, "I wonder." Irrationally, as they never had him, she thought, "Tilden will now suggest Diego."

He did. A person, he said, of no importance, but possible. And Diego had come. Soon they would say something to each other. What, she did not know. Or perhaps they wouldn't say it. Mysterious raptures would envelop them beyond the scope of speech. Nor was she thinking of caresses. Not thinking of them.

It was the French mistress who brought it about. "Will you dine with us tomorrow, child, since you are to be alone?"

"Thank you, Madame, I will come with pleasure."

"Until then, *chère petite*. As you see, I am leaving Piroigne behind for bridge." And to Diego who stood near her, hat in hand, "May I set you down somewhere, Monsieur?"

"I thank you, my own car is here."

Then they were alone. From the salon came the voices of the players—"Three spades—no, never Burgundy—*Voyons, voyons*—my trick, I think—" The sunlight poured in upon them and lay in still, dazzling pools on the red Turkey carpet and marquetry floor. A tall footman crossed the hall silently behind them with a tray of liqueurs—the dregs of mint and brandy gleaming like emeralds and blood red rubies in the stems of the small glasses. Silently he disappeared. Her gold hair blazed in the sunlight and the pearl gray of her dress dissolved—ethereal.

"Yellow hair," he murmured, "we who are dark must love it. Oh, it is beautiful!"

She raised her charged eyes to his. Unspoken things grew loud between them. Upon its perfect sound came a thin belated tinkle of speech, late because emotion had outrun it. Speech lagged along, dotting the i's. But breathless, worshipful:

"Tomorrow night—afterward? At the little gate—at eleven? At twelve?"

Terrified, she whispered back, "At twelve."

Oh Westport! Oh, horror! Oh, rubies dissolved in crystal and stained glass!

SILENCE

by Babette Deutsch

Silence with you is like the faint delicious
Smile of a child asleep, in dreams unguessed:
Only the hinted wonder of its dreaming,
The soft, slow-breathing miracle of rest.
Silence with you is like a kind departure
From iron clangour and the engulfing crowd
Into a wide and greenly barren meadow
Under the bloom of some blue-bosomed cloud;
Or like one held upon the sands at evening,
When the drawn tide rolls out, and the mixed light
Of sea and sky enshrouds the far, wind-bellowed
Sails that move darkly on the edge of night.

REFLECTIONS

by W. L. Werner

MAN is superior to other animals because he has a mind. A large part of this mind's work is devoted to pride in his superiority, efforts to measure his superiority, and pity for inferior creatures. In this way man keeps the gap between himself and other animals exceedingly small.

II

LIFE is perfectly balanced. The most beautiful girls marry earliest and so are most quickly worn by the cares of wifehood and motherhood.

III

THIS is the greatest of ages. There have been periods of finer sculpture or loftier philosophy or more enduring architecture or nobler literature or more sensuous music. Our virtue is speed; by going fast enough we are sure that we shall arrive somewhere.

It should be a prison offense to laugh at a horse running on a treadmill.

IV

TO say that a man lacks a sense of humor is universally an insult. Men are proud of the cowardice that ridicules the unusual and the prison that confines them to normality. . . . In the same manner many prisoners spend their time polishing and admiring their chains.

WHAT could be more silly and disgusting than a ten years' war for the possession of one woman? Yet it is the theme of our greatest epic.

VI

IN pain and misery we are born, grow old and die. We are named and married and buried to the accompaniment of words mumbled by a man in a black gown. . . . The thing that carries us through is the hope that we may live again.

VII

A LAW is a remedy concocted for evils of yesterday or a hundred years ago, and applied to the troubles of today. . . . Little Johnnie lay sick with scarlet fever. "There is no use going to the doctor," said his dear mother. "We can give him some of the mumps pills that we used last year."

VIII

DENYING the wisdom of centuries, the modern woman has discovered that marriage for money is a Crying Evil. People should marry for love and be independent in other respects. . . . Yet love is simply an emotion, swelling and ebbing, at decent intervals. If marriages are to be more or less secure and families are to be preserved, other bonds are necessary. Among these bonds are friendship, respect, common interests and economic necessity—and the strongest of these is money.

IX

THE jury system is the epitome of democracy. It is based on the idea that a compromise between twelve men, each a little wrong, will approximate justice. The smaller the crime, the more nearly correct this idea is. But it fails as soon as the crime is committed against a community, a nation or a race. Then the twelve react as one man; there is no compromise between extremes, and the one possible just verdict has small chance among a hundred equally probably unjust decisions.

X

IT is characteristic of man's befuddled state of mind that he considers woman a peculiar and mysterious creature. He roams the world, creates beauty, uncovers knowledge, is worn by a thousand passions, and then he returns home to marvel at the simple creature that bears his children. . . . Only a peculiar, mysterious and complex mind could marvel so at simplicity.

HIS STENOGRAPHER

As He Dictates to Her

by Harriet Monroe

Does she love you? Well, I wonder—
Married twenty years, they say!
You, so bald and fat and funny,
Grubbing like a mole for money!
Guess she likes to spend the plunder—
Gee—she knows the wav!

She's a grand one—Lord, what dresses!
Handsome, too, proud as a queen—
With her doings in the papers,
Dinners, dances, all the capers,
Likes to lead the show, my guess is!
You're the gold machine!

If she knew you as I know you,
Would she spend it—say?
If she knew each trick and quibble,
Little fishes hooked that nibble,
Business murders—would she show you
Such a grandstand play?

You're a savage money maker—
Good to her, though, sure—and me.
Kind old pirate! What in thunder
Does she think of you, I wonder?
What neat stories do you take her—
So she will not see?

AESTHETIC JURISPRUDENCE

by George Jean Nathan

ART is a reaching out into the ugliness of the world for vagrant beauty and the imprisoning of it in a tangible dream. Criticism is the dream book. All art is a kind of subconscious madness expressed in terms of sanity; criticism is essential to the interpretation of its mysteries, for about everything truly beautiful there is ever something mysterious and disconcerting. Beauty is not always immediately recognizable as beauty; what often passes for beauty is mere infatuation; living beauty is like a love that has outlasted the middle-years of life, and has met triumphantly the test of time, and faith, and cynic meditation. For beauty is a sleepwalker in the endless corridors of the wakeful world, uncertain, groping, and not a little strange. And criticism is its tender guide.

Art is a partnership between the artist and the artist-critic. The former creates; the latter re-creates. Without criticism, art would of course still be art, and so with its windows walled in and with its lights extinguished would the Louvre still be the Louvre. Criticism is the windows and chandeliers of art: it illuminates the enveloping darkness in which art might otherwise rest only vaguely discernible, and perhaps altogether unseen.

Criticism, at its best, is a great, tall candle on the altar of art; at its worst, which is to say in its general run, a campaign torch flaring red in behalf of aesthetic ward-healers. This campaign torch motif in criticism, with its drunken enthusiasm and raucous hollering born of ignorance, together with what may be called the Prince Albert motif, with its sober, statue-like reserve born of ignorance that, being well-mannered, is not so bumptious as the other, has contributed largely to the common estimate of criticism as a profession but slightly more exalted than Second Avenue auctioneering, if somewhat less than Fifth. Yet criticism is itself an art. It might, indeed, be well defined as an art within an art, since every work of art is the result of a struggle between the heart that is the artist himself and his mind that is the critic. Once his work is done, the artist's mind, tired from the bitterness of the struggle, takes the form of a second artist, puts on this second artist's

strange hat, coat and checkered trousers, and goes forth with refreshed vigour to gossip abroad how much of the first artist's work was the result of its original splendid vitality and how much the result of its gradually diminished vitality and sad weariness. The wrangling that occurs at times between art and criticism is, at bottom, merely a fraternal discord, one in which Cain and Abel belabour each other with stuffed clubs. Criticism is often most sympathetic when it is apparently most cruel: the propounder of the sternest, hardest philosophy that the civilized world has known never failed sentimentally to kiss and embrace his sister, Therese Elisabeth Alexandra Nietzsche, every night at bed-time. "It is not possible," Cabell has written, "to draw inspiration from a woman's beauty unless you comprehend how easy it would be to murder her." And—"Only those who have firmness may be really tender-hearted," said Rochefoucauld. One may sometimes even throw mud to tonic purpose. Consider Karlsbad.

Art is the haven wherein the disillusioned may find illusion. Truth is no part of art. Nor is the mission of art simple beauty, as the text books tell us. The mission of art is the magnification of simple beauty to proportions so heroic as to be almost overpowering. Art is a gross exaggeration of natural beauty: there was never a woman so beautiful as the Venus di Milo, or a man so beautiful as the Apollo Belvedere of the Vatican, or a sky so beautiful as Monet's, or human speech so beautiful as Shakespeare's, or the song of a nightingale so beautiful as Ludwig van Beethoven's. But as art is a process of magnification, so criticism is a process of reduction. Its purpose is the reducing of the magnifications of art to the basic classic and aesthetic principles, and the subsequent announcement thereof in terms proportioned to the artist's interplay of fundamental skill and overtopping imagination.

The most general fault of criticism lies in a confusion of its own internal processes with those of art: it is in the habit of regarding the business of art as a reduction of life to its essence of beauty, and the business of criticism as an expansion of that essence to its fullest flow. The opposite is more reasonable. Art is a beautiful, swollen lie; criticism, a cold compress. The concern of art is with beauty; the concern of criticism is with truth. And truth and beauty, despite the Sunday School, are often strangers. This confusion of the business of art and that of criticism has given birth to the so-called "contagious," or inspirational, criticism, than which nothing is more mongrel and absurd. Criticism is designed to state facts—charmingly, gracefully, if

possible—but still facts. It is not designed to exhort, enlist, convert. This is the business not of the critic, but of those readers of the critic whom the facts succeed in convincing and galvanizing. Contagious criticism is merely a vainglorious critic's essay at popularity: facts heated up to a degree where they melt into caressing nothingness.

But if this "criticism with a glow" is not to be given countenance, even less is to be suffered the criticism that, in its effort at a fastidious and elegant reserve, leans so far backward that it freezes its ears. This species of criticism fails not only to enkindle the reader, but fails also—and this is more important—to enkindle the critic himself. The ideal critic is perhaps much like a Thermos bottle: full of warmth, he suggests the presence of the heat within him without radiating it. This inner warmth is essential to a critic. But this inner warmth, where it exists, is automatically chilled and banished from a critic by a protracted indulgence in excessive critical reserve. Just as the professional frown assumed by a much photographed public magnifico often becomes stubbornly fixed upon his hitherto gentle brow, so does the prolonged spurious constraint of a critic in due time psychologically hoist him on his own petard. A writer's work does not grow more and more like him; a writer grows more and more like his work. The best writing that a man produces is always just a little superior to himself. There never was a literary artist who did not appreciate the difficulty of keeping up to the pace of his writings. A writer is dominated by the standard of his own writings; he is a slave *in transitu*, lashed, tormented, and miserable. The weak and inferior literary artist, such a critic as the one alluded to, soon becomes the helpless victim of his own writings: like a vampire of his own creation they turn upon him and suck from him the warm blood that was erstwhile his. A pose in time becomes natural: a man with a good left eye cannot affect a monocle for years without eventually coming to need it. A critic cannot write ice without becoming in time himself at least partly frosted.

Paraphrasing Pascal, to little minds all things are great. Great art is in constant conflict with the awe of little minds. Art is something like a wonderful trapeze performer swinging high above the heads of the bewildered multitude and nervous lest it be made to lose its balance and to slip by the periodic sudden loud marvellings of the folks below. The little mind and its little criticism are the flattering foes of sound art. Such art demands for its training and triumph the countless preliminary body blows of muscular criticism guided by a muscular mind.

Art and the artist cannot be developed by mere back-slapping. If art, according to Beulé, is the intervention of the human mind in the elements furnished by experience, criticism is the intervention of the human mind in the elements furnished by aesthetic passion. Art and the artist are ever youthful lovers; criticism is their chaperon.

II

I DO not believe finally in this or that "theory" of criticism. There are as many sound and apt species of criticism as there are works to be criticized. To say that art must be criticized only after this formula or after that, is to say that art must be contrived only out of this formula or out of that. As every work of art is an entity, a thing in itself, so is every piece of criticism an entity, a thing in itself. That "Thus Spake Zarathustra" must inevitably be criticized by the canons of the identical "theory" with which one criticizes "Tristan and Isolde" is surely difficult of reasoning.

To the Goethe-Carlyle doctrine that the critic's duty lies alone in discerning the artist's aim, his point of view and, finally, his execution of the task before him, it is easy enough to subscribe, but certainly this is not a "theory" of criticism so much as it is a foundation for a theory. To advance it as a theory, full-grown, full-fledged and flapping, as it has been advanced by the Italian Croce and his admirers, is to publish the preface to a book without the book itself. Accepted as a theory complete in itself, it fails by virtue of its several undeveloped intrinsic problems, chief among which is its neglect to consider the undeniable fact that, though each work of art is indubitably an entity and so to be considered, there is yet in creative art what may be termed an aesthetic genealogy that bears heavily upon comprehensive criticism and that renders the artist's aim, his point of view and his execution of the task before him susceptible to a criticism predicated in a measure upon the work of the sound artist who has just preceded him.

The Goethe-Carlyle hypothesis is a little too liberal. It calls for qualifications. It gives the artist too much ground, and the critic too little. To discern the artist's aim, to discern the artist's point of view, are phrases that require an amount of plumbing, and not a few foot-notes. It is entirely possible, for example, that the immediate point of view of an artist be faulty, yet the execution of his immediate task exceedingly fine. If carefully planned triumph in art is an entity, so also may be undesigned triumph. I do not say that any such latter phe-

nomenon is usual, but it is conceivable, and hence may be employed as a test of the critical hypothesis in point. Unschooled, without aim or point of view in the sense of this hypothesis, Schumann's compositions at the age of eleven for chorus and orchestra offer the quasi-theory some resistance. The question of the comparative merit of these compositions and the artist's subsequent work may not strictly be brought into the argument, since the point at issue is merely a theory and since theory is properly to be tested by theory.

Intent and achievement are not necessarily twins. I have always perversely thought it likely that there is often a greater degree of accident in fine art than one is permitted to believe. The aim and point of view of a bad artist are often admirable; the execution of a fine artist may sometimes be founded upon a fine point of view that is, from an apparently sound critical estimate, at striking odds with it. One of the finest performances in all modern dramatic writing, upon its critical reception as such, came as a great surprise to the writer who almost unwittingly had achieved it. Art is often unconscious of itself. Shakespeare, writing popular plays to order, wrote the greatest plays that dramatic art has known. Mark Twain, in a disgusted moment, threw off a practical joke, and it turned out to be literature.

A strict adherence to the principles enunciated in the Goethe-Carlyle theory would result in a confinement of art for all the theory's bold aim in exactly the opposite direction. For all the critic may accurately say, the aim and point of view of, say, Richard Strauss in "Don Quixote" and "A Hero's Life," may be imperfect, yet the one critical fact persists that the executions are remarkably fine. All things considered, it were perhaps better that the critical theory under discussion, if it be accepted at all, be turned end foremost: that the artist's execution of the task before him be considered either apart from his aim and point of view, or that it be considered first, and then—with not too much insistence upon them—his point of view and his aim. This would seem to be a more logical aesthetic and critical order. Tolstoi, with a sound, intelligent and technically perfect aim and point of view composed second-rate drama. So, too, Maeterlinck. Synge, by his own admissions adjudged critically and dramatically guilty on both counts, composed one of the truly first-rate dramas of the Anglo-Saxon stage.

In its very effort to avoid pigeon-holing, the Goethe-Carlyle theory pigeon-holes itself. In its commendable essay at catholicity, it is like a garter so elastic that it fails to hold itself up. That there may not be

contradictions in the contentions here set forth, I am not sure. But I advance no fixed, definite theory of my own; I advance merely contradictions of certain of the phases of the theories held by others, and contradictions are ever in the habit of begetting contradictions. Yet such contradictions are in themselves apposite and soundly critical, since any theory susceptible of contradictions must itself be contradictory and insecure. If I suggest any theory on my part it is a variable one: a theory that, in this instance, is one thing and in that, another. Criticism, as I see it—and I share the common opinion—is simply a sensitive, experienced and thoroughbred artist's effort to interpret, in terms of aesthetic doctrine and his own peculiar soul, the work of another artist reciprocally to that artist and thus, as with a reflecting mirror, to his public. But to state merely what criticism is, is not to state the doctrine of its application. And herein, as I see it, is where the theorists fail to cover full ground. The anatomy of criticism is composed not of one theory, but of a theory—more or less generally agreed upon—upon which are reared in turn other theories that are not so generally agreed upon. The Goethe-Carlyle theory is thus like a three-story building on which the constructor has left off work after finishing only the first story. What certain aspects of these other stories may be like, I have already tried to suggest.

I have said that, if I have any theory of my own, it is a theory susceptible in practice of numerous surface changes. These surface changes often disturb in a measure this or that phase of what lies at the bottom. Thus, speaking as a critic of the theatre, I find it impossible to reconcile myself to criticizing acting and drama from the vantage point of the same theory, say, for example, the Goethe-Carlyle theory. This theory fits criticism of drama much better than it fits criticism of acting, just as it fits criticism of painting and sculpture much more snugly than criticism of music. The means whereby the emotions are directly affected, and soundly affected, may at times be critically meretricious, yet the accomplishment itself may be, paradoxically, artistic. Perhaps the finest acting performance of our generation is Bernhardt's *Camille*: its final effect is tremendous: yet the means whereby it is continued are obviously inartistic. Again "*King Lear*," searched into with critical chill, is artistically a poor instance of play-making, yet its effect is precisely the effect striven for. Surely, in cases like these, criticism founded strictly upon an inflexible theory is futile criticism, and not only futile but eminently unfair.

Here, of course, I exhibit still more contradictions, but through contradictions we may conceivably gain more secure ground. When his book is once opened, the author's mouth is shut. (Wilde, I believe, said that; and though for some peculiar reason it is today regarded as suicidal to quote the often profound Wilde in any serious argument, I risk the danger.) But when a dramatist's play or a composer's symphony is opened, the author has only begun to open his mouth. What results, an emotional art within an intellectual art, calls for a critical theory within a critical theory. To this composite end, I offer a suggestion: blend with the Goethe-Carlyle theory that of the aforementioned Wilde, to wit, that beauty is uncriticizable, since it has as many meanings as man has moods, since it is the symbol of symbols, and since it reveals everything because it expresses nothing. The trouble with criticism—again to pose a contradiction—is that, in certain instances, it is often too cerebral. Feeling a great thrill of beauty, it turns to its somewhat puzzled mind and is apprised that the thrill which it has unquestionably enjoyed from the work of art might conceivably be of pathological origin, a fremitus or vibration felt upon percussion of a hydatoid tumour.

The Goethe-Carlyle theory, properly rigid and unyielding so far as emotional groundlings are concerned, may, I believe, at times safely be chucked under the chin and offered a communication of gipsy ardour by the critic whose emotions are the residuum of trial, test and experience.

III

COQUELIN put it that the footlights exaggerate everything: they modify the laws of space and of time; they put miles in a few square feet; they make minutes appear to be hours. Of this exaggeration, dramatic criticism—which is the branch of criticism of which I treat in particular—has caught something. Of all the branches of criticism it is intrinsically the least sober and the least accurately balanced. It always reminds me somehow of the lash in the hands of Eacus, in "The Frogs," falling upon Bacchus and Xanthus to discover which of the two is the divine, the latter meantime endeavouring to conceal the pain that would betray their mortality by various transparent dodges. Drama is a two-souled art: half divine, half clownish. Shakespeare is the greatest dramatist who ever lived because he alone, of all dramatists, most accurately sensed the mongrel nature of his art. Criti-

cism of drama, it follows, is similarly a two-souled art: half sober, half mad. Drama is a deliberate intoxicant; dramatic criticism, aromatic spirits of ammonia; the re-creation is never perfect; there is always a trace of tipsiness left. Even the best dramatic criticism is always just a little dramatic. It indulges, a trifle, in acting. It can never be as impersonal, however much certain of its practitioners may try, as criticism of painting or of sculpture or of literature. This is why the best criticism of the theatre must inevitably be personal criticism. The theatre itself is distinctly personal; its address is directly personal. It holds the mirror not up to nature, but to the spectator's individual idea of nature. If it doesn't, it fails. The spectator, if he is a critic, merely holds up his own mirror to the drama's mirror: a reflection of the first reflection is the result. Dramatic criticism is this second reflection. And so the best dramatic criticism has about it a flavour of the unconscious, grotesque and unpremeditated. "When Lewes was at his business," Shaw has said, "he seldom remembered that he was a gentleman or a scholar." (Shaw was speaking of Lewes' free use of vulgarity and impudence whenever they happened to be the proper tools for his job.) "In this he showed himself a true craftsman, intent on making the measurements and analyses of his criticism as accurate, and their expression as clear and vivid, as possible, instead of allowing himself to be distracted by the vanity of playing the elegant man of letters, or writing with perfect good taste, or hinting in every line that he was above his work. In exacting all this from himself, and taking his revenge by expressing his most laboured conclusions with a levity that gave them the air of being the unpremeditated whimsicalities of a man who had perversely taken to writing about the theatre for the sake of the jest latent in his own outrageous unfitness for it, Lewes rolled his stone up the hill quite in the modern manner of Mr. Walkley, dissembling its huge weight, and apparently kicking it at random hither and thither in pure wantonness."

Mr. Spingarn, in his exceptionally interesting, if somewhat overly indignant, treatise on "Creative Criticism," provides, it seems to me, a particularly clear illustration of the manner in which the proponents of the more modern theories of criticism imprison themselves in the extravagance of their freedom. While liberating art from all the old rules of criticism, they simultaneously confine criticism with the new rules—or ghosts of rules—wherewith they free art. If each work of art is a unit, a thing in itself, as is commonly agreed, why should not each

work of criticism be similarly a unit, a thing in itself? If art is, in each and every case, a matter of individual expression, why should not criticism, in each and every such case, be similarly and relevantly a matter of individual expression? In freeing art of definitions, has not criticism been too severely defined? I believe that it has been. I believe that there may be as many kinds of criticism as there are kinds of art. I believe that there may be sound analytical, sound emotional, sound cerebral, sound impressionistic, sound destructive, sound constructive, and other sound species of criticism. If art knows no rules, criticism knows no rules—or, at least, none save those that are obvious. If Brahms' scherzo in E flat minor, op. 4, is an entity, a work in and of itself, why shouldn't Huneker's criticism of it be regarded as an entity, a work in and of itself? If there is in Huneker's work inspiration from without, so, too, is there in Brahms': if Brahms may be held a unit in this particular instance with no consideration of Chopin, why may not Huneker with no consideration of Brahms?

If this is pushing things pretty far, it is the Spingarns who have made the pushing necessary. "Taste," says Mr. Spingarn, "must reproduce the work of art within itself in order to understand and judge it; and at that moment aesthetic judgment becomes nothing more or less than creative art itself." This rings true. But granting the perfection of the taste, why define and limit the critical creative art thus born of reproduction? No sooner has a law been enunciated, writes Mr. Spingarn, than it has been broken by an artist impatient or ignorant of its restraints, and the critics have been obliged to explain away these violations of their laws or gradually to change the laws themselves. If art, he continues, is organic expression, and every work of art is to be interrogated with the question, "What has it expressed, and how completely?" there is no place for the question whether it has conformed to some convenient classification of critics or to some law derived from this classification. Once again, truly put. But so, too, no sooner have laws been enunciated than they have been broken by critics impatient or ignorant of their restraints, and the critics of critics have been obliged to explain away these violations of the laws, or gradually to change the laws themselves. And so, too, have these works of criticism provided no place for the question whether they have conformed to some convenient classification of the critics of criticism or to some law derived from this classification.

"Criticism," said Carlyle, his theories apart, "stands like an inter-

preter between the inspired and the uninspired, between the prophet and those who hear the melody of his words, and catch some glimpse of their material meaning, but understand not their deeper import." This is the best definition that I know of. It defines without defining; it gives into the keeping of the interpreter the hundred languages of art and merely urges him, with whatever means may best and properly suit his ends, to translate them clearly to those that do not understand; it sets him free from the very shackles which Carlyle himself, removing from art, wound in turn about him.

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